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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-108 *4 June 1996*

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Inter-Arab Affairs

Inter-Arab: Mubarak, al-Asad To Attend Saudi Peace Summit 'Next Week'

NC0406100896 Paris AFP in English 0946 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Riyadh, June 4 (AFP)—Saudi Arabia will host a summit here next week with presidents Husni Mubarak of Egypt and Hafiz al-Asad of Syria to review the peace process with Israel, an Arab official said Tuesday [4 June].

"The summit is to reevaluate the peace process after the Israeli elections" for prime minister which right-wing Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu won, the official said, asking not to be named.

The official spoke after attending a meeting between the foreign ministers of Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia.

Inter-Arab: London Paper Sees 'Winners and Losers' in Likud Victory

MM3105142596 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 31 May 96 p 17

[Article by 'Abd-al-Wahhab Badrakhan: "Israel Deserves Him and He Deserves It!"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Israel has cast the vote it actually wanted and achieved the result it deserves. Netanyahu is "good for the Jews" or "the best Jew," according to the election leaflets. So Israel deserves this leader as its prime minister, and he deserves it. The world capitals had said that voting for Peres would be "a vote for peace." But the Israelis' verdict is clear: They do not want peace.

Of course, the first lesson of this vote warns of the serious split in Israeli society. True, this split is not new, but its emergence now, and in such a manner, points to the direct threat to peace as a pursued aim in the region and to the peace process as a working mechanism. Although the Likud espoused "peace" in its program, it proposed a completely different concept. It transcended what can be termed "positive aspects" of the Labor Party and went beyond and ignored the Madrid formula. According to the vrtually final results of the election, a very small majority of the Israelis has opted for Netanyahu's rigid peace formula.

Numerous analysts have been throwing light on the gaps and shortcomings in the steps taken toward peace so far, taking into consideration that the Labor Party is more moderate, or, rather, less extremist than the Likud. So what is meant by the arrival of the extremist party itself and its involvement in the peace process and its difficult negotiations? Does it mean anything other than more gaps and, consequently, a further abandonment of justice and its spirit? A man Like Netanyahu — with his political and psychological makeup and tendency to embrace state terrorism as an ideology — is to the Israelis a guarantee of security, rather than a guarantee of the establishment of a real peace. Without doubt a careful analysis of the broad outlines of Likud's program will show that he is aiming at a symbolic peace that preserves the occupation as it stands: a status quo.

If the elections had been held on the eve of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, that is, in the wake of the bombing operations, Peres would have achieved the same result. Losing by a fraction of a point is similar to losing by several points. This means that all the support for Peres, all the U.S. hysteria that accompanied the election campaign, and all the "glory" of the Operation Grapes of Wrath, including the Qana massacre, committed in retaliation for the Hamas operations...all this proved futile, because Peres's putting on a Likud face to win the votes of religious and extremist elements caused him to lose his peaceful face, and hence he appeared deceitful and opportunist, unable to convince those inside and outside the country.

With Peres's downfall, Arab losers and winners began their calculations yesterday. The losers are numerous. As for the winners, they are limited to one party. Without doubt the Palestinian Authority will lose as a result of Peres's absence as a "partner" and it will face further difficulties, especially as Netanyahu showed no respect during his election campaign for this Authority and its leaders, even though he is invited as a future prime minister to deal with it as a "partner." Observers in general believe that any losses for the Palestinians are gains for Jordan. Has not Netanyahu stressed his complete rejection of a Palestinian state? Perhaps Syria is neither a loser nor a winner with regard to the outcome of the elections. But it will find itself facing a new negotiator who will not hesitate to exert pressure on it. However, the biggest loser is the sponsor of all, the United States, which staked all its cards on the ill-fated Peres. All that President Clinton is hoping for now is that the Labor Party leader's downfall will not affect candidate Clinton's chances of winning a second term in the White House.

Netanyahu will have to prove — in practice, and swiftly — that he is committed to peace, as there are past incidents implicating him in this connection. He will also have to prove that he had nothing to do with the murder of Yitzhaq Rabin. He will also have to accomplish a more serious task: preventing the eruption of civil war over peace and its fate. And since he has no [positive] stands on peace, he and his party will be judged sternly.

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Inter-Arab: London Paper—Arab Unity Must Confront Likud Victory

MM3105160996 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 31 May 96 p 9

[Article by 'Ali Ibrahim: "Arabs in Wake of Likud Victory. Likud Victory — If Confirmed Today — Comes as Gloomy Reality for Arab Parties Participating in Peace Negotiations, Which Requires That Arab Front Be United"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Arab parties concerned with the peace process in the Middle East, including the Palestinians, must have been preparing themselves yesterday for what they are going to face in the stage ahead. They will be compelled to deal with a hard-line Israeli political tendency that includes gloomy faces such as Ariel Sharon, who is expected to join the next Likud government to be formed by Netanyahu, if his victory over Peres is confirmed today.

Arab reactions to the preliminary results of the Israeli elections — which indicate that Netanyahu is ahead, with little hope of Peres of winning when the results of the remaining 140,000 votes are announced — reflect the surprise of the parties that wagered on Peres. They now expect problems and obstacles in the peace process, especially with regard to Israeli redeployment in the West Bank and withdrawal from the Golan.

If we accept Likud's victory — that is, if no other surprise is going to emerge — the Arab parties are entitled to be pessimistic about the peace process, and they are not alone in this respect. Many of the world states interested in peace, including Washington, were not prepared to deal with Netanyahu in view of his party's extremist ideas, which are incompatible with the realities on the ground or the changes the world is experiencing.

The Palestinian Authority is the party likely to be most affected by Likud's formation of an Israeli government, because of the Israeli right wing's hostile ideas. This is reflected in the Authority's state of shock and its failure to comment on the results. The Palestinian officials' dealings with the Labor government under Rabin and then Peres were not easy in the first place, so you can imagine their dealings with politicians promoting obsolete ideas, describing the PLO as a terrorist organization, seeking to continue to build settlements, and refusing to negotiate over Jerusalem, agree to the establishment of a Palestinian state, or withdraw from the Golan.

However, the reality which no one should ignore is that the Likud — whatever the ideas and policies it announced during the election campaign — will be compelled, whether it likes it or not, to start from the point where Peres left off. It cannot backtrack on the agreements and commitments signed. It will also be compelled to take account of the international community's desire for peace to be established in the region.

The Likud might try to resort to maneuvering to evade these commitments, including negotiation over Jerusalem's status. Thus a united and coherent Arab stand is the only thing capable of thwarting such maneuvers.

The urgent need now is for Arab coordination and the formation of a unified front on the peace issue so as to strengthen the position of Arab negotiators. Disagreements and separate deals weaken the Arab front and strengthen the Israelis' position, whether the government is a Labor or Likud government. The Arab parties should also provide their utmost support for the Palestinians lest they be singled out by the Likud hawks. They should also intensify the efforts to get the international parties to shoulder their responsibilities lest the region enter into a cycle of violence that could torpedo all that has been achieved on the peace front.

Inter-Arab: Yig'al 'Amir Seen as 'Main Winner' in Israeli Elections

MM0306123896 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 1 Jun 96 p 17

[Article by Khayrallah Khayrallah: "Rabin's Assassin Wins"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The main winner in the Israeli elections may well be Yitzhaq Rabin's assassin, Yig'al 'Amir. He was able to assassinate the Israeli prime minister and create the confrontation between Shim'on Peres and Binyamin Netanyahu at a time when, because of the operations carried out last February and March, the Israelis had forgotten that peace is more important than security and that there can be no security without peace.

Rabin's assassin changed the facts in Israel and the region, helped by a Shim'on Peres who excels at talking about his vision for the region but without really undertaking any concrete action to achieve this vision which will eventually prevail in the Middle East. Peres could very easily have called early elections after Rabin's assassination and should not have waited all this time and fixed the election date for 29 May, after all the operations for which Hamas claimed responsibility were carried out, and after waging a war in Lebanon which resulted in the killing of innocent Lebanese people and the destruction of much of the country's infrastructure,

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with no other real outcome than the April understanding. Some time will be needed to ascertain whether this understanding will have any political impact on calming the situation in south Lebanon and on preventing the escalation of any confrontation inside the occupied zone.

The Likud Bloc's political rhetoric created Yig'al 'Amir, Rabin's assassin, who returned Likud's favor by carrying Netanyahu to the premiership. Had Rabin remained, the situation would have been different. Shim'on Peres's real failure may have been his inability to at all times assume General Rabin's mantle.

Although this may seem like hindsight, it is, however, part and parcel of the contradictions that Binyamin Netanyahu will inherit. On the one hand, there is a peace process and its achievements to date, thanks to the historic conciliation between the Palestinian and Israeli peoples; and on the other there is the extremism which has returned Likud to power in Israel.

Extremism here is not represented only in Yig'al 'Amir as an individual but is instead in all the actions that the region has witnessed in the wake of Yitzhaq Rabin's assassination, and which have led to the completion of 'Amir's task and the achievement of what he could not achieve by killing Yitzhaq Rabin....

Logic dictates that the new Israeli prime minister cannot abandon the peace process. Moreover, he will be able to take crucial decisions, starting with the withdrawal from south Lebanon, because the peace process is too important to be at the mercy of any one person or party, given that, to a large extent, it also concerns the United States and Europe, and that the agreements ratified by the Palestinians were also ratified by the United States as witness. However, to leave matters to Likud extremism in Israel and to the extremism of Arab Likudists [al-likudiyin al-'Arab] would mean crowning Yig'al 'Amir the region's king. Can this be allowed in a world on the threshold of the 21st century?

Inter-Arab: Arabs Warned Against Hasty Response to Netanyahu

MM0306110296 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 3 Jun 96 p 9

[Mahmud 'Atallah article: "Sudden Change. The Sudden Change in Some People's Position on Netanyahu Indicates That There Are Already Schemes Involving Him at the Expense of Higher Arab Interests"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Although politics is the game of flexibility in which there are no permanent friends or permanent foes, this flexibility has to be based on rules that know no concession or backtracking, otherwise it inevitably results in disaster.

In politics, interests sometimes require a change in stance that turns yesterday's foe into a friend, and vice versa. But such a change can produce the opposite result if it is characterized by haste and lack of vision, especially if the matter concerns rights or destiny.

Thus the simplest rule for any change in political stance is for that change to be well studied — which is logical. However, the most important thing is to implement it in stages and gradually, because rapid changes tend to have the effect of an earthquake.

Without doubt it is essential for the current situation, namely Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu's election as prime minister in Israel, to be dealt with without haste and gradually.

One thing cannot be ignored, namely that Netanyahu's assumption of power in Israel — even though he and Shim'on Peres are the two sides of one coin — represents a radical development and the beginning of a new political era in the Middle East.

Netanyahu and his party represent a hard-line tendency whose election program differs from the political line pursued by Peres and the Labor Party which, despite its hard line on the basic peace issues, was involved in a process launched long ago, a process which has made long strides that are considered historic achievements.

We know from experience that the Labor Party's position is established and clear. As for Likud, its position is still limited to speculation, prediction, and impractical interpretation on the basis of its declared policy and election program.

On that basis reactions to Netanyahu's assumption of power — indeed, any deliberations before dealing with him — must be cautious and measured.

This conflicts completely with the attitude of those who have rushed to change their stands and their declared hostility to Netanyahu and Likud, which they had accused of extremism, and started inviting the Israeli prime minister-elect to meetings and dialogues.

Such an invitation may be understood if it is made by U.S. President Bill Clinton's administration, on the grounds that it is working earnestly to safeguard the results of its efforts to achieve peace in the region. It is also eager to build bridges with the new regime in Israel quickly, before the U.S. presidential election to be held in November.

But it is difficult to understand the meaning of such a hasty invitation from an Arab party fully aware that one of the simplest slogans adopted by Netanyahu and Likud is not to hold dialogue with Yasir 'Arafat and

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the Palestinians on the grounds that they are "terrorists." Certainly this slogan could change, just as the slogans adopted by the Labor Party and Peres changed as Peres was compelled — under U.S. pressure — to shake hands with 'Arafat. But until the possibilities of a change in the position adopted by Netanyahu and Likud become clear, the logical thing for the people in question is to be patient and not to rush things, lest by doing so they confirm the reports of prior schemes and agreements with Netanyahu at the expense of the Palestinians' rights and higher Arab interests.

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Views Relations With Arab Countries, Israel

NC0406080896 London MBC Television in Arabic 2130 GMT 3 Jun 96

[Interview with Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat by 'Irfan Nizam-al-Din in London on 3 June—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Nizam-al-Din] President Yasir 'Arafat, welcome to MBC again. This is another crucial stage for Palestine. You have not yet issued any personal reaction, as head of the Palestinian Authority [PA], to changes in Israel and the election of Binyamin Netanyahu.

['Arafat] As you know, the Palestinian leadership — the PLO Executive Committee, the Council of Ministers, and the speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council — met and issued a statement on this issue. This is an internal Israeli affair and we respect the democratic view of the Israeli people.

[Nizam-al-Din] But this democratic choice appeared to be against peace. What is the future of the peace process, especially on the Palestinian track?

['Arafat] This question should not be asked of Yasir 'Arafat, but the cosponsors of the peace conference and the world community at large. Do not forget that this Palestinian-Israeli agreement is not a bilateral agreement. As you know, brother 'Irfan, this is an internationally sponsored agreement signed in Cairo and Washington. The latest agreement was signed under the supervision of President Clinton, as was the first agreement. In addition, all world leaders concerned with this issue signed the agreement alongside us.

[Nizam-al-Din] You received a message from President Clinton. Did it contain any assurances?

['Arafat] It was a warm, important, positive, and constructive message. It concentrated on President Clinton, personally, and the U.S. Administration continuing to pay attention to the peace process and to implementing the agreements between us and the Israelis.

[Nizam-al-Din] You also received a telephone call from King Husayn, I believe.

['Arafat] There were contacts with President Mubarak, His Majesty King Husayn, and my brothers the Arab leaders. We are in constant touch with each other.

[Nizam-al-Din] Did King Husayn convey anything to you about his contacts with Netanyahu?

['Arafat] No. He conveyed nothing to me. But I will certainly address this subject in our tripartite summit on 5 June.

[Nizam-al-Din] In al-'Aqabah the day after tomorrow, God willing. What do you expect from this summit?

['Arafat] As I said, today I actually started with the good news about a report published in AL-HAYAH that the Gulf Cooperation Council on the level of the foreign ministers discussed the Arab summit.

[Nizam-al-Din] They said they will call for an Arab summit.

['Arafat] This heralded good tidings for me. I believe this tripartite meeting will be followed by other meetings. We hope an Arab summit will be held and that it will expand gradually. We also hope it will be a comprehensive summit attended by all the Arab leaders to restore Arab solidarity and unity in light of these circumstances and challenges that face us as an Arab nation: to be or not to be in the new world order. It is our right, and it is the right of our people, to ask how we intend to confront this new world order while we have not yet rebuilt our Arab unity, strength, and solidarity.

[Nizam-al-Din] Do you believe it will be held soon?

['Arafat] I have high hopes. I am optimistic.

[Nizam-al-Din] There is talk of a conflict between Jordan and the PA and that the Alexandria summit contributed toward solving the problems.

['Arafat] There are no problems. None whatsoever. The summit in Cairo is the biggest proof of the strength of Egyptian-Jordanian-Palestinian relations, which gave the article on strengthening Arab relations top priority in the negotiations.

[Nizam-al-Din] What about international and Arab support for Palestine?

['Arafat] There are many promises but few have been met, despite our continuing to confront a siege, closure, and even collective punishment measures carried out against all our workers—150,000 of them. They were out of work for four and a half months. Our daily losses are between 6 and 7 million dollars. If you calculate

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them they are equal to all the contributions we will be getting from the donor states.

[Nizam-al-Din] Some time ago, you discussed Saudi support....

['Arafat interrupts] Undoubtedly, my brothers in Saudi Arabia kept their promises. I thank the custodian of the two holy mosques, His Majesty King Fahd, and wish him good health. May God preserve him as a backer and defender of our Arab and Islamic nation.

[Nizam-al-Din] I hope so too. Mr. President, as regards Hebron, the first hot issue, the agreement was signed in Taba. That was it.

['Arafat] They are supposed to hand over the city to us on 12 June. I will raise this before the cosponsors of the peace process and the world community. I will ask: Is what we agreed upon being implemented?

[Nizam-al-Din] Will Syria join the tripartite summit?

['Arafat] I hope so. I truly hope so.

[Nizam-al-Din] There is talk about Egyptian mediation. There are also reports that Netanyahu has been invited to the summit.

['Arafat] No, no.

[Nizam-al-Din] He has not been invited. Perhaps he has been invited to Cairo?

['Arafat] The report was merely a press report, no more.

[Nizam-al-Din] Let us discuss Jerusalem and the Palestinian state. How do you see things today? You always say you can see the minarets of Jerusalem.

['Arafat] I can see the minarets of Jerusalem, the churches of Jerusalem, the walls of Jerusalem. They see them from afar, but I see them close up. I hope I am right.

[Nizam-al-Din] What about the Palestinian state?

['Arafat] The Palestinian state, with Jerusalem as its capital, is coming, whether people like it or not.

[Nizam-al-Din] What if you face some problems, such as the talks stopping?

['Arafat] Do you think we are going on a sightseeing tour or a picnic? We know this requires the solidarity of the Arab and Islamic nations as well as believing Christians, because Jerusalem is the first qiblah and third holiest shrine for Islam, the place from which Prophet Muhammad started his nocturnal journey to heaven, and the cradle of Christ, God's peace and blessings be upon them.

[Nizam-al-Din] Mr. President, I know your time is limited and I thank you very much for this opportunity. There has been much talk recently about your health. Thank God, I found you in good health and we had breakfast together. What is the secret behind these rumors?

['Arafat] What happened was that I had a very bad case of influenza. I went to the tripartite summit in Cairo, where people saw me tired. My voice was croaking.

[Nizam-al-Din] What about reports regarding the vice president or collective leadership after these rumors?

['Arafat] The leadership is collective, praise be to God. The biggest proof is that in the first incident we faced we convened a meeting of the Palestinian leadership, the PLO Executive Committee, and the Palestinian Council of Ministers.

[Nizam-al-Din] How is Zahwah ['Arafat's daughter] doing? Is she well?

['Arafat] She is very well, praise be to God.

[Nizam-al-Din] Thank you, Mr. President. We thank you for giving us this opportunity.

['Arafat] 'Irfan, my daughter is virtually your daughter. You are like a brother to me.

[Nizam-al-Din] We are still waiting for 'Ammar to come.

['Arafat] May God be with you.

[Nizam-al-Din] Thank you, Mr. President.

Palestinian Affairs: PLO's Sha'th—Netanyahu Has To Deliver Peace Accords

LD0406095096 London BBC 2 Television Network in English 2130 GMT 3 Jun 96

[Interview with Nabil Sha'th, political adviser to Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, in Oxford, by presenter Peter Snow, in the studio; from the Newsnight program — live]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [Snow] I'm joined now by a top aide to Yasir 'Arafat, who was with him at the Oxford Union tonight, Nabil Sha'th, who is also one of the leading negotiators for the Palestinians. Mr. Sha'th how can Mr. 'Arafat do business with Mr. Netanyahu, when Mr. Netanyahu represents the interests of people like we've just heard on the West Bank there in those settlements?

[Sha'th] Well he represents the interests of many people who are against the peace process, but now he represents the whole of Israel. In the final analysis, the Israeli

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people — although a very small majority have elected him — and he has now become the representative of the government that has signed a peace accord with us that has been cosponsored and countersigned by President Clinton and the Russian Federation and several countries in Europe and in the whole world — and he has to deliver.

[Snow] But supposing he doesn't, I mean supposing for example, take the first example, supposing he doesn't redeploy Israeli troops from the town of Hebron?

[Sha'th] I think this is the first sign that we have to look to. If he does deliver what he said yesterday in his speech that he is going to comply with the agreements that were signed and the agreements stipulated by the 12th of this month the Israeli forces should redeploy out of Hebron — I think this will be the first sign whether he is going to act as a responsible prime minister of Israeli or as simply the opposition leader with all the interest groups and settlers that he represented before this election. And I think this is a responsibility to make him comply, not only by the Palestinians, but it's a responsibility of the whole world.

[Snow] But you are asking, Mr. Sha'th, aren't you, to turn upside down virtually his entire election program. I mean I've got his platform, his Likud platform here. No question of talks about dividing Jerusalem, it stays the capital of Israel — united and undivided — no question of an independent Palestinian state for you, and you of course heard him say that there was no question of him restraining the settlements from expanding.

[Sha'th] If we are to really judge him by his statements and the statements of people like Mr. Sharon and others in his coalition, then really we should have a serious concern that the whole peace process will be turned around and all the gains that we have made — all of us — in the Middle East and in the world would vanish. But that is, I think, where we have to wait to see whether his actions will live up to his words prior to his being elected, or to the word of the Israeli Government signature on the agreements. I think we have to see that and Hebron is the first test.

[Snow] What do you say, Mr. Sha'th, to that voice we heard from the West Bank there, suggesting that Yasir 'Arafat had shown poor leadership and poor statesmanship by aligning himself too closely with the government of Mr. Peres?

[Sha'th] I don't think the question is aligning himself with the party of Mr. Peres. As you said with the government of Mr. Peres which was then the legitimate government of Israel that has been voted into office, and had the support of the Israeli Knesset, and even then I don't think the alliance was of any personal nature, although very good relations developed between Mr. 'Arafat and late Mr. Yitzhaq Rabin and then Mr. Peres. The question we're dealing with is an international treaty that was signed twice, in it's declaration of principle and it's interim agreement in the White House. I think Mr. 'Arafat knew exactly what he was doing. He was doing his best to get the Palestinian people back into their land and to have sovereignty of that land and freedom as part of a package deal to have real peace in the Middle East. And I think he has to rely on all of those who have supported that process and who countersigned it.

[Snow] Have you turned your face entirely against, Mr. Sha'th, the idea that if you don't get what you want, you will encourage more resistance by the Palestinian people in the West Bank?

[Sha'th] I think there is a difference between what we are committed to and what may happen as a result of flagrant Israeli violation and destruction of the peace process. What we intend to do is to continue negotiating and not to despair and to continue our commitment for this process being an irreversible process. Now what may happen if this totally destroyed by this present Israeli government is something none of us would even like to contemplate or even think of at this moment.

[Snow] Mr. Sha'th thank you very much for joining us.

Palestinian Affairs: PNC Speaker Urges Period of 'Observation' of Netanyahu

MM0406105296 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 4 Jun 96 p 2

[Report by Mufid 'Awwad: "Al-Za'nun: Palestinian-Jordanian Relationship Will Eliminate Role-Sharing and Alternative Homeland Option"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman — Palestine National Council [PNC] Speaker Salim al-Za'nun has announced that the staunch Jordanian-Palestinian relationship is capable of thwarting the schemes advocating role-sharing between Jordan and Israel or the alternative homeland option. He stressed that former Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has effectively frozen the peace process with the Palestinians over the past six months. Thus there is no reason for us to be alarmed or concerned over Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu's victory. He believes that "an observation period is needed so that we can respond on the basis of the new Israeli prime minister's behavior."

In a statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT al-Za'nun said that "with regard to the claim that the Likud is working for the Jordanian option concerning the

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Palestinian issue, we in the PLO and the Palestinian National Authority are satisfied with the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship, which is always capable of thwarting all the schemes advocating role-sharing or the alternative homeland option."

Al-Za'nun denied the existence of any Palestinian fears in this connection, saying: The Palestinians and the Jordanians cannot forget that when the late leader Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir authorized King Husayn of Jordan to claim the West Bank even if that led to recognizing Israel, the administration of former U.S. President Richard Nixon betrayed Jordan and said that this land was not for the Palestinians. "And whenever the Palestinians made any efforts to resolve the Palestinian issue, the Americans always said: Resolution 242 does not represent the PLO."

Al-Za'nun believes that the Palestinians and the Jordanians have grown up and cannot be fooled by any maneuvers of that kind. The Palestinian official urged patience before making any judgment in the wake of Netanyahu's victory. He said, "we need an observation period so that we can see how the new Israeli prime minister will behave." [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: Quray' Warns Against Forcing Palestinians To Take New Stand

TA0306170496 Gaza AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH in Arabic 2 Jun 96 pp 1, 15

[Report by 'Abd-al-Raziq Abu-Jazr]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gaza, AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH — Ahmad Quray', alias Abu-'Ala', speaker of the Legislative Council [LC], has called on Syria and Lebanon to join the tripartite summit that will be held in al-'Aqabah with the participation of President Yasir 'Arafat, King Husayn, and President Husni Mubarak to discuss the Israeli election results and formulate a comprehensive Arab perception.

In an exclusive interview with AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH, Quray' stressed that the National Authority [NA] is committed to its firm stands, such as the right of return, the right to self-determination, and the right to establish an independent Palestinian state. This is what will achieve real peace in the region. He said that the Palestinian side welcomes anyone who will sit down with it to continue the peace process. He called on the cosponsors of the peace process, the international community, Europe, Japan, and the Islamic states to fulfill their responsibilities because the Middle East region in general and Palestine in particular are the key to peace and stability in the world. He said: Either peace or conflict. He added that the peace process has reached the point of no return and that it is impossible to back down from it. The Israeli Government must realize this fact.

Abu-'Ala' said that the time has come to convene a comprehensive Arab summit. He noted that the Arab nation needs to restore its unity and heal its wounds. Quray' said: The new Israeli Government emerged in the wake of elections that represent the Israeli people's choice. He added: We do not choose either the Israeli ruling party or the Israeli Government. We will deal with the election results as they materialized. The LC speaker affirmed that the peace process is the only way to foster a Palestinian-Israeli partnership. Therefore, the new government must adhere to the peace process in accordance with its regulations, letter, and spirit. He said that statements by some victors in the Israeli right wing will make the Palestinians adopt other positions and refuse to renegotiate issues that have already been settled. He explained that the Palestinians need a new negotiating strategy. Moreover, they have to reassess the entire negotiating process in light of the new developments.

Regarding the postponement of the withdrawal from Hebron, Abu-'Ala' said that what has happened is contrary to what the two sides agreed. No Israeli quarter has the right to procrastinate on the issue of the redeployment in Hebron. They must fulfill this commitment. He called for closing ranks and for the reinforcement of our internal unity with all Palestinian political forces without exception. He said that the NA has held numerous meetings at the highest levels to assess the new situation.

Palestinian Affairs: Investors Freeze $50-Million Project After Netanyahu Win

JN0306154696 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 3 Jun 96 pp 1, 20

[Report by Muhammad Khayr al-Farah]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman—A group of Jordanian and Palestinian businessmen and investors decided to freeze a giant investment project with a total capital of $50 million that they were planning to set up in the area of Janin, following the victory of Binyamin Netanyahu in the Israeli elections.

Muhammad Nur al-Din, a Jordanian businessman and a member of the founding committee, said: We expected Peres to be reelected, and we were waiting for his reelection to embark on the project. However, the election results surprised us and prompted us to freeze the project until further notice. [passage omitted]

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Palestinian Affairs: Abu-Middayn on Likud Victory, Peace Prospects

NC0406065096 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0420 GMT 4 Jun 96

[Interview with PA Justice Minister Furayh Abu-Middayn by Muhammad 'Abd-al-Shafi in Gaza; date not given; from the "Correspondents' Dispatches" program—live or recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] ['Abd-al-Shafi] There are various reactions to the Israeli election result. How do you assess things now?

[Abu-Middayn] Now is a time of waiting. We should not be preoccupied with or bound by the reaction. Peres has gone and Netanyahu has arrived. We should look at this as details in Israel's domestic formula. There is certainly a change in Israel's society, not just in the Israeli leadership. There is today a new Jewish fundamentalism as evidenced by the fundamentalists winning an unprecedented 24 seats in the Knesset. This is the big change that we view very seriously. It is a change in the structure of Israel's society. It is a move toward a hardline, intransigent, and extremist fundamentalism that is nourished from Brooklyn in the United States. Diplomatically, we say we respect the Israeli choice. Of course, whether one thing or another is chosen is not our affair. But we should monitor the event as it is. When Igal Amir's bullets removed Rabin, the road was opened for the Likud and for the extremists in Israel. So the situation is not an easy one. It was not easy even with the Labor Party and Peres. There has been no real peace process during the past eight or nine months, since no more than 50 or 60 percent of the Taba and Cairo agreements has been implemented. The basic issues in the phased agreement, not to mention the final one, are still pending. We expect difficult days and months ahead but we are here on the ground. The Palestinian Authority [PA] is here and we are among our masses and people. Time is precious but the homeland is more precious. All we can do is stand fast and adhere strongly to the inalienable Palestinian right.

['Abd-al-Shafi] Binyamin Netanyahu spoke about peace and security and linked the two but he referred to real peace. In your view, what does he mean by real peace? And is this regression?

[Abu-Middayn] Of course there is some regression. Netanyahu's speech was of no major political value; it was a celebratory speech, nothing more than an address to his supporters. He tried to send a message to the Arab and outside worlds. It was more of a public relations speech than one of a new strategy. But they always raise the security issue because they do not want a Palestinian state or [to discuss] the issues of Jerusalem, the settlements, and the refugees' return. These were basic issues in the Likud's program before the elections.

['Abd-al-Shafi] [Words indistinct] the elections?

[Abu-Middayn] I doubt he will concede them. I believe he will adhere to them. But you know Egypt is heading moves now to rally and unite the Arab rank. If Netanyahu wants to take Israel back to the ghetto and close its borders, then he will be the loser. We will see, because words, good or bad, are not the criteria; the negotiations are the real criteria. The implementation of what was agreed on will be the real test. We will see what the Likud has to offer and what its stance is at the negotiating table. I do not want to cast doubts or be pessimistic or optimistic. Practically, we should wait; we should be patient. But we, as Palestinians, regret the change. The Israeli [election] result is regrettable and annoying; it would have been even if Peres had won. It was Peres who thwarted most of the agreements. Imagine what Likud will do. We do not want to prejudge things.

['Abd-al-Shafi] But there are agreements between the PA and Israel. To what extent is Israel bound by them? What is the role of the guarantor countries, particularly the peace process sponsors?

[Abu-Middayn] These are international agreements signed by the PLO and Israel before the whole world in Washington. The Israeli Government and Knesset have ratified them. Israel has always disregarded and ignored international legitimacy and agreements. It considers itself a superpower. You can see its fight to keep nuclear weapons and its problems with Egypt and the Arab world. It wants to be unique, separate, and the master. This is Israel's problem. This is the real problem. But following the demise of the Soviet Union, the Gulf war, and the tremors that followed them, there are no hot spots from which wars erupt, other than this region. The world must assume its responsibility. I am specifically referring to the United States and, second, to Europe. But I tell the Arabs: You come first and you [words indistinct]. If there is an Arab stance that closes the doors before Israel and stops [word indistinct], then it must take account of the Arabs, as it does the United States, because no matter what the tension with the United States that tension always disappears. This is the year of elections in the United States. In its long history with the United States, Israel has never [?differed] with it except during the Suez war, when Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir nationalized the Suez Canal. There was a crisis between the two for the first and possibly last time in U.S. history. Therefore,

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international legitimacy and the world.... [pauses] The Arabs must primarily rely on themselves.

['Abd-al-Shafi] Hebron was raised quite often in recent weeks. The last time was of course the Israeli cabinet's decision — the last decision made by the Peres government — to refer the issue to the next government. What is your view of the justification for this decision and why did Peres act in this way?

[Abu-Middayn] This is the black comedy of Peres, the ditherer, the hesitant, and the man of no-decision, who should, at least morally, have complied with the agreement he signed, agreements that stipulated that the Israeli forces should withdraw on 12 June. If Peres is evading the issue and leaving behind him a bomb for the Palestinians and the next Israeli Government, then imagine what the Likud will do. The Hebron issue has been resolved and decided upon and an agreement on it has been signed. We will not negotiate over it or reopen the agreement on it. We will adhere to it right up until the last minute. We will wait for the return of the president ['Arafat] and al-'Aqabah and see what will happen. This is just one type of Israeli behavior. There is no great difference between the one leaving and the one arriving.

['Abd-al-Shafi] We thank Furayh Abu-Middayn, the PA's justice minister.

[Abu-Middayn] Thank you.

Palestinian Affairs: Suha 'Arafat—PLO Leader To Seek Peace With Netanyahu

BR0306151296 Rome L'UNITA in Italian 3 Jun 96 p 13

[Interview with Suha 'Arafat, PLO leader Yasir 'Arafat's wife, by Umberto de Giovannangeli in Jerusalem; date not given: "Le'a Rabin, Don't Go, We Need You"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [de Giovannangeli] Newspapers reported that Yasir 'Arafat was in shock at the outcome of the Israeli elections. What can you tell us in this respect?

['Arafat] He certainly was very much disillusioned but after the first moment of understandable dismay Yasir returned to what he was before: A pragmatic politician who will know how to react in this situation. One thing is certain: Using all his strength he will seek peace even with the Netanyahu government because there is no alternative to dialogue, if we do not want new bloodbaths in this wrecked territory. Of course, religious fanaticism is terrifying and it leads to overt racism by the extremist Hebrews. They have nothing to do with the Jewish population's traditional tolerance. These extremists are the opposite numbers of the Islamic fundamentalists and they are no less dangerous to peace and the dialogue between the two populations. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: Paper Rejects Likud Desire To Reopen Oslo Accords

TA0306160796 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 1 Jun 96 p 3

[Editorial: "Peace in the Region Is an International Decision"]

[FBIS Translated Text] At a time when international and regional reactions are calling on the new Israeli leadership to continue the peace process in order to achieve progress on the various negotiating tracks, U.S. President Clinton stated that he backs Israel and that as long as it is ready to take risks to promote the peace process, the United States will support it and minimize the security dangers that Israel so fears. These U.S. and international assurances should convince the Israeli leadership to move forward in the peace process. The decision on peace in the region is an international decision. It is not easy to oppose it or to procrastinate in implementing the agreements in an attempt to obstruct this decision or parts of the agreements. Peacemaking requires confidence-building, and that is not connected to individuals but to regimes and states.

Regrettably, incumbent Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, in one last step prior to handing over power to Prime Minister-elect Netanyahu, failed to deliver on his promise to redeploy in Hebron. According to the Oslo accords, redeployment was supposed to be implemented even though Peres would be remaining in power for only another 45 days. He stated that this decision should be postponed and be dealt with by the incoming government. We cannot but thank Peres for this decision, which is a breach of promise and a stab in the back of the process for which he endeavored. All of us are aware of the position of the Likud Party and the Israeli right wing on the issue of Hebron and the redeployment in this city. At best, the new government will put this issue on hold and try to avoid the implementation of this or any other decision calling for withdrawal from the Palestinian territories and for transferring power to the Palestinians.

Netanyahu, his party, and all the right-wing parties wish to reassess the Oslo accords, ignoring the fact that reopening the negotiations requires the consent of the Palestinians and the international community, especially the cosponsors of the peace process.

The talks had to make great strides before the Palestinians and the Israelis managed to reach a formula which

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does not even realize the Palestinians' aspirations or the minimal Palestinian constants. We accepted those agreements, however, in order to give a chance and reach peaceful solutions to end the Palestinian-Israeli conflict which, as acknowledged by friends and foes, is the core of the conflict in the region. We accepted the Oslo accords as a three-year transitional stage to be followed by agreements on a final settlement that ends all forms of conflict and through which the Palestinians would obtain their legitimate rights in establishing their entity and sovereignty over their land. Talk about reassessing the agreements means opening all the files once again and returning to square one.

Perhaps Netanyahu and his ruling coalition believe that, in the months ahead, they can exploit the time that has been wasted to freeze the peace process and refrain from moving in any direction until the conclusion of the U.S. elections at the end of this year. Yet Numerous factors affirm that it is not possible to wait for long. The situation in the Palestinian homeland is at a boiling point. Everyone was waiting for the Israeli elections to be over and be followed by a breakthrough, but the upheaval in Israel turned all expectations upside down and shuffled the cards. No longer can anyone predict what lies ahead.

Everyone wagered on Peres' victory in the elections, but the outcome was contrary to expectations. As the parties had reached agreements on peacemaking with the previous Israeli Government, it seems that they must now reassess their positions and review their calculations in light of the new developments and the rise to power of a radical right-wing government in Israel. The peace process and the establishment of peace, however, remain the common interest of the region's people. It is incumbent upon all the parties to realize that the alternative is not in anyone's interest.

Palestinian Affairs: Palestinians Vow To 'Resist' Closure of Orient House

NC0206212596 Paris AFP in English 2121 GMT 2 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jerusalem, June 2 (AFP) — Palestinians will resist "by all means" any decision by Israel's prime minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu to close down Orient House, the PLO's representation in Jerusalem, an official warned Sunday [2 June].

"Our resistance could take the form of a non-violent intifadah," said Mahir 'Abd-al-Rahman, a member of the Palestinian legislative council for Jerusalem, referring to the 1987-1993 uprising against Israeli rule.

He told AFP that Orient House "has become a symbol of our sovereignty and one which we will defend by all means."

Netanyahu, during the election campaign, threatened to close down the Palestinian institution, on the grounds that it infringes on the Jewish state's sovereignty over the whole city.

"Jerusalem, the capital of Israel, will never be divided," the right-wing Likud bloc leader said Sunday in his first public address since Wednesday's elections.

The Palestinians want Arab east Jerusalem, which Israel seized in the 1967 Middle East war and annexed, as the capital of a future state of their own.

"We have already granted east Jerusalem the status of a future capital thanks to Orient House, where foreign ministers are regularly received," said another Palestinian official, asking not to be named.

Another Jerusalem legislator, Hatim 'Abd-al-Rahman, said that if Israel goes ahead and closes it down, "we will create 20 more Orient Houses because the Israelis will never be able to prevent us from pursuing our action."

Palestinian Affairs: PA Calls on Israel To Implement Hebron Redeployment 12 Jun

TA0206071896 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 2 Jun 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Gaza — Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, President Yasir 'Arafat's adviser, has stated the following:

The Palestinian Authority [PA] and the Hebron masses have shown extreme flexibility toward redeployment from Hebron. Now, after the conclusion of the Israeli election campaign, the PA expects the Israeli Government, in its meeting today, to implement what was stipulated in the agreement — to redeploy on 12 June as was previously agreed. The implementation of this agreement will advance the peace process and spare it any negative repercussions.

Palestinian Affairs: Quray' on al-'Aqabah Summit, Prospects for Peace Process

LD0406105196 Rome RAI Radio Uno Network in Italian 0600 GMT 4 Jun 96

[Interview with Ahmad Quray', speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council, by Riccardo Cristiano; place and date not given — recorded, Quary' speaks in English with superimposed Italian translation]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Cristiano] What do you expect from the al-'Aqabah summit?

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[Quray', in English, fading to superimposed Italian translation] King Husayn, Mubarak, and 'Arafat are not meeting each other for the first time in al-'Aqabah to coordinate their efforts in the peace process. It is an important opportunity, in which we hope Syria and Lebanon will join — if not tomorrow, then next time.

[Cristiano] You have spoken of a new Palestinian approach to the peace process. Can you explain this?

[Quray'] It's simple. When we reached an agreement with the Israeli negotiators from the Labor Party, they understood our expectations, and we understood theirs. Now the government in Israel has changed. I do not want to comment on what was said by the winners in their election campaign. But they are certainly more radical, and therefore we too need a new negotiating team.

[Cristiano] Is that why 'Arafat is worried? Could the situation get out of his control?

[Quray'] No, not at all. He is stronger than ever, given that all the world's leaders write to him and invite him. 'Arafat is now receiving messages of reconciliation even from internal opposition groups. This is the moment to bring about Palestinian unity. This will form part of our new negotiating strategy.

[Cristiano] What do you think about Netanyahu, personally?

[Quray'] Look, it's too early to talk about Netanyahu. We don't know him on a one-to-one basis. I would like to hear him say that he is determined to continue with the peace process. At that point we could ask him: What peace process? Let's see if we can find some common ground.

Palestinian Affairs: Quray' Urges Syria, Lebanon To Join Tripartite Summit

JN0206154896 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1300 GMT 2 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In a statement to the AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH newspaper today, Legislative Council Speaker Ahmad Quray', alias Abu-'Ala', urged Syria and Lebanon to join the tripartite Palestinian-Jordanian-Egyptian summit. Abu-'Ala' said the current situation requires more coordination to unify Arab positions.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Military Leader Reportedly Flees Gaza

JN0106110496 Amman AL-URDUN in Arabic 3 Jun 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian intelligence services recently informed the Israeli authorities that Muhammad Dayf, who is a senior Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] military leader and who tops Israel's most-wanted list, is no longer in the occupied territories. Dayf recently managed to flee the Gaza Strip, probably to Sudan or Libya. Palestinian intelligence services undertook intensive efforts to detain Muhammad Dayf, but failed to do so.

Palestinian Affairs: Palestinian, Iraqi, Jordanian Economic Cooperation Urged

JN0406122096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0900 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian, Iraqi, and Jordanian unions of trade and industry issued a declaration of principles intended to broaden the spheres of cooperation and bolster economic relations between Palestine, Iraq, and Jordan.

A statement issued after the meeting of the three unions held recently in the Jordanian capital of Amman said the Iraqi Union of Commerce and Industry welcomes the participation of Palestinian and Jordanian industries at the next Baghdad International Fair.

The declaration called for ending the siege and suffering of the Palestinian and Iraqi peoples and emphasized the right of the two peoples to lead honorable lives, like all people in the region.

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Egypt

Egypt: Mubarak, al-Asad Hold News Conference

NC0306133896 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1217 GMT 3 Jun 96

[News conference by Egyptian President Husni Mubarak and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad with unidentified correspondents at al-Qubbah Presidential Palace in Cairo—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Mubarak] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. I have just met with my brother President Hafiz al-Asad. These are regular and continuing meetings between Egypt and Syria. Our relations are deep and longstanding, and will continue as such, God willing. We discussed some aspects of our bilateral relations, and there was no problem there. We discussed the current situation in the region and the issue of peace, especially after the government change in Israel. We studied the situation from all aspects and we agreed to wait to see what the situation will be and what moves the new Israeli Government will take. I welcome my brother the president, although he does not need a welcome to his country, Egypt. Thank you.

[Al-Asad] Thank you, Your Excellency Mr. President. As we all know, we are constantly exchanging visits and views, when we discuss our issues. This is what happened today, as well. Clearly, there are changes involving basic issues in the region, and we have to make intensive efforts and to exchange views and advice. We also need to intensively support each other. The issue of any Arab brother concerns all the Arabs. The problems of this age, especially in our region, are not the kind of problems that used to occur in the past. Past problems involved only narrow areas—and I am not talking about geographic areas only, but about many areas, including our very existence. We must always keep in touch, mobilize ourselves, as it were, and address our issues in a way that meets the needs of our peoples and nations. I am optimistic—and I believe that President Mubarak shares this optimism—that we can deal with our basic issues and achieve our objectives. This is what I wanted to say now, and I await your questions. I repeat my thanks to my brother, President Mubarak.

[Correspondent] In light of recent developments in the region, such as the outcome of the Israeli elections and the Turkish-Israeli alliance, have you discussed with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad a formula to rearrange the Arab household, so that it can face the challenges of the coming stage with all the possibilities it involves?

[Mubarak] In fact, we discussed this matter with brother President Hafiz. Even before the change that occurred in Israel, we have been calling for bringing about Arab reunion and restoring to the Arab nation its unity of views. This was before the present circumstances.

With the current conditions in mind, we thought and discussed and found it wise to wait and see what the conduct of the new government will be like. Although the speech made yesterday by the prime minister-elect did not inspire optimism, we found it wise to wait and see what the actual policy of the new government will be. We will act in the light of this policy.

[Correspondent] President Mubarak: There is a growing belief that the current developments in the Middle East and the peace process require enhanced Arab solidarity and expanding the scope of consultation among Arab leaders. Even if the circumstances are not favorable for an expanded Arab summit, do you agree to holding a tripartite or quadripartite summit that involves Egypt, Syria, and other influential Arab states to develop an Arab vision that acts as a nucleus for a unified Arab position, acceptable to the concerned Arab parties?

[Mubarak] If circumstances allowed a summit meeting involving all Arab leaders, we would not have spared the effort. But current Arab conditions do not allow us to hold such a meeting. But as far as a tripartite or quadripartite meeting is concerned, we are consulting with our brothers in the Arab region. We hope we will meet in a tripartite or quadripartite meeting, or whatever form we agree on. We will begin with a meeting of that size. But it should be expanded later, until we meet in a real, collective Arab summit.

[Correspondent] President Mubarak: We did not see any difference between Netanyahu's political and electoral speeches. As your excellency mentioned, the speech Netanyahu made yesterday was strict about Jerusalem and ignored the basics of the peace process and the rights of the Palestinian people. How do you see the future of the peace process in light of this?

[Mubarak] I have just said that we heard the speech on television and we heard the electoral speeches. We are assuming that we are still in the electoral campaign and should wait and see the statements the Israeli Government will make once it is formed. In light of what will emerge, our collective action as an Arab nation will be determined. We are all seeking peace. They must pursue peace as well. If their goal is a real, just, and comprehensive peace, I do not think that we will disagree in this regard.

[Correspondent] Your Excellency President Mubarak: In light of the Israeli elections, and the telephone conversation between the new Israeli prime minister and yourself immediately after the results of the elections

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were announced, how does Egypt view the future of the peace process? We would also like to hear Syria's viewpoint concerning the future of the peace process.

[Mubarak] A telephone conversation was held after the results of the elections were announced. He said he would meet with me after he formed his government. I welcomed this. The same thing had happened with Mr. Rabin. He [Netanyahu] said he was eager to advance the peace process. He said that there was a misunderstanding regarding many points and that perhaps we should meet. I, therefore, say that I should wait until I meet with the new prime minister and understand his inclinations. If he is for peace, then we are all for peace — a just and comprehensive peace based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and the exchange of land for peace. These are the bases on which the Madrid conference was launched.

[Correspondent] President Husni Mubarak: Whenever Damascus and Cairo get together, Arab hopes are revived that Arab nationalism is still alive. We hope to hear from you about any practical steps to be made in the foreseeable future regarding the unity of the Arab position and the return of Arab solidarity. The second part of my question is: What is Your Excellency's views on the military agreements between Turkey and Israel and their implications on the Arab world and the situation in the region in general?

[Mubarak] The Arab nation is still alive and will remain alive forever; no one will ever be able to turn it into a dead body. As regards closing Arab ranks, I have explained this before. We have been working toward this objective. President Hafiz al-Asad and I have been discussing this for a long time; we have been making steps and holding contacts to bring the Arabs together. It is necessary to revive the Arab peoples' hopes, and we agree that we must work to close the Arab ranks to revive the Arab spirit, which is the safety valve for the Arabs. As regards the Israeli-Turkish agreement, I do not have the details of this agreement. Our foreign minister went to Turkey and discussed this with Turkish officials. What he was informed of does not give us clear signals or enough information regarding the objective of the agreement. We are awaiting more information to be able to evaluate this agreement. We have already said that we do not approve of, and will stand against, any agreement that constitutes an axis against any Arab country, be it Syria or any other.

[Correspondent] This question is for His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad. Judging by the optimism you expressed a few minutes ago, do you think that it is possible to hold an Arab summit that will bring together the cordon Arab states that are involved in negotiations with Israel, particularly at this time and in light of recent developments in Israel, such as the Likud's assumption of power?

[Al-Asad] I only heard the part of the question about the Arab cordon states and the prospect of holding a summit, the subsequent part of the question I could not hear. Perhaps we can deduce what it is from the first part of the question. Syria always favors Arab meetings, whether it is a meeting of the cordon states or an overall Arab meeting. We believe that this is the only way, if we choose to follow it, which will allow us to attain our deliverance in a more or less guaranteed manner. If we do not do that and fail to reach consensus or near consensus, the road will be difficult and fraught with dangers. This issue formed part of our discussion today. As President Mubarak noted, we are searching for a possible method to bring all the Arabs together. We discussed more than one proposal on how to do this. Everything we discussed eventually aims to achieve total Arab solidarity. We will seek to do this to the utmost of our ability. We hope that Syria and Egypt will show resolve and that our other Arab brothers will show similar determination, because that will serve the interests of all Arabs. No Arab country can feel right when another Arab country is being deceived or harmed. This is not a new view, but a constant truth that we have always emphasized during our meetings and on every occasion where it was necessary to point it out. We are calling for—and please add your voices to us—efforts to achieve this objective.

[Mubarak] We will take one last question.

[Correspondent] President al-Asad, Your Excellency: What do you expect the U.S. role to be like in the coming stage with regard to promoting the peace process? Do you expect the negotiations on the Syrian-Israeli track to be resumed soon, particularly after the coming to power of Likud leader Netanyahu?

[Al-Asad] I am sorry, but the microphone is making a lot of noise and I can't hear very well.

[Correspondent, louder] What do you expect the U.S. role to be like in the coming stage with regard to promoting the peace process? The second part of the question is this: Do you expect the negotiations on the Syrian-Israeli track to be resumed soon, particularly after the coming to power of Likud leader Netanyahu?

[Al-Asad] We are not really talking about the resumption of negotiations now. First we would like to understand the situation properly. We think that we understand much from the statements that have been made, although sometimes we receive information that conflicts with the statements. For this reason, we will seek

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to get more information. We do not feel that matters are moving in a positive direction, and for this reason I said right from the beginning that we must be vigilant and alert in order not to be negligent or allow ourselves to be deceived. Certainly, in light of the existing conditions, the resumption of the negotiations is not being considered. When it is considered you will hear about it.

[Correspondent] What U.S. role do you expect to see at this time?

[Al-Asad] You know of course that what happens in Israel has an echo in the United States, a special echo that is different from any U.S. reaction to developments in any other country, whether Arab or non-Arab. In the United States they also have circumstances that have certain requirements. As you know, the election campaign has begun and this has certain requirements. I believe that the U.S. Administration seriously wants to see peace achieved. It has acted accordingly. You have all heard the reports saying that the efforts made by the current U.S. Administration are earnest. What it can actually achieve, however, will be decided by future circumstances.

[Mubarak, interposing] You must know that the U.S. role is a vital and basic one with regard to the Middle East issue. This is a definite matter and has been mentioned before. Thank you very much.

[Al-Asad] This is certainly so because they were the people who made the initiative, as you know. It was their efforts, or rather initiative, which started the peace process. We responded to it, of course after reading it carefully and finding that it was just and comprehensive, as we and they declared.

Egypt: Al-Sharif on al-Asad Visit, Discussion Topics

JN0306130796 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1115 GMT 3 Jun 96

[Report by unidentified radio correspondent in Cairo; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] President Hafiz al-Asad and Egyptian President Muhammad Husni Mubarak held a closed meeting at the Presidential Palace in Cairo at 1145 today. [passage omitted]

Egyptian Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif, in a statement to the Damascus radio team, stressed the importance of President Hafiz al-Asad's visit to Cairo and his meeting with President Husni Mubarak. He said: The visit is aimed at holding consultations on issues of interest to the Arab situation and exchanging views on developments in the region. There is no doubt that the Israeli elections and their repercussions on the peace process will be discussed along with several other Arab issues.

The Egyptian information minister stressed the need to work out an Arab position, and said that President al-Asad and President Mubarak are eager to clear the Arab atmosphere and close Arab ranks in response to an Arab desire to advance the march of just and comprehensive peace and to adhere to Arab principles, including the land-for-peace formula and respect for UN and Security Council resolutions expressing the conscience of the international community.

Regarding the Turkish-Israeli accord and the dangers it poses to the Arab nation, Safwat al-Sharif said Syria and Egypt believe that any alliance on this level will harm pan-Arab security. He added: Egypt and Syria declared their clear-cut position and that they are against such axes, particularly in the military area.

Egypt: Al-Baz Discusses Arab Ties, Denies Differences With Syria

JN0306184696 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 3 Jun 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo—Dr. Usamah al-Baz, first under secretary of the Egyptian Foreign Ministry and director of the Egyptian president's office for political affairs, stressed that Cairo welcomes any positive step toward improving relations with Baghdad and easing the international blockade clamped on the Iraqi people, which is no longer justified.

Dr. Usamah al-Baz said that Egypt calls for enabling the Iraqi people to obtain their basic needs of food and medicine and to export their oil. It also calls for canceling all the sanctions that were imposed on them.

In an exclusive statement to AL-MAJD correspondent in Cairo, al-Baz noted that Egypt does not support any attempts to partition Iraq or threaten its national soil and that it is concerned about Iraq's unity, solidarity, and cohesion.

Al-Baz stressed that Egypt is keen on seeing Iraq restore its strength after the destruction to which it was exposed in the wake of the Gulf war.

Regarding the current political crisis between Egypt and Sudan, al-Baz said: Egypt rejects any escalation in this crisis. It seeks to avert any new international sanctions against the Sudanese people. Sanctions, if implemented, would cause serious economic and living repercussions. He said: Egypt will confront any foreign plans to establish an independent state in southern Sudan. Any such plans are also aimed at harming Egypt's national and pan-Arab security, something Egypt will not accept or tolerate.

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Al-Baz added: We call on the Sudanese rulers to extradite any terrorists or suspects residing in Sudan because no one will approve of any support to terrorist groups, whether by Sudan or any other state.

Regarding recent reports by some international news agencies on differences between Syria and Egypt over the settlement negotiations, relations with Israel, and other issues, Dr. al-Baz said: These reports are totally baseless. There are no substantial or in-depth differences between the political leaders of the two sisterly states. Moreover, he said, there are regular meetings between Presidents Mubarak and al-Asad and constant consultations and coordination in all areas pertaining to the negotiations, bilateral relations, and other issues.

Indeed, al-Baz said, Egypt totally supports all the legitimate and inalienable rights of sisterly Syria in the peace process, most prominent among which is withdrawal from the Golan Heights and the rejection of any arrangements or terms that encroach on Syrian sovereignty over these heights or anything that conflicts with the implementation of the relevant international resolutions.

Al-Baz stressed that we cannot speak about just and comprehensive peace or about Middle East stability and security before reaching an agreement that guarantees all the legitimate rights of Syria. This, he added, is what Egypt seeks to achieve through fair negotiations based on the constant principles and resolutions of international legitimacy.

Answering a question by AL-MAJD on the regional cooperation arrangements that are currently in full swing, al-Baz said: No one can impose their regional or international ideas and perceptions on us. Suffice it to say that only the Arab world and no other state or party is concerned with making such arrangements. Therefore, he added, we believe that realizing Arab ambitions of establishing a common Arab market achieves a minimum level of joint Arab cooperation. This will be a basic step to confront any arrangements that are harmful to or do not serve our interests. Meanwhile, he added, such a level of coordination and integration will help strengthen Arab economies and increase their chances of competing in regional and international markets. However, al-Baz maintained, all this remains hinged on a political Arab will capable of meeting these requirements.

Egypt: Syria's al-Asad Concludes Visit, Departs

NC0306150896 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1450 GMT 3 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 3 Jun (MENA)— Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad and the delegation accompanying him left Cairo this evening, following a brief visit to Egypt that lasted for a few hours.

While here, al-Asad held talks with President Husni Mubarak on ways to consolidate bilateral ties and the latest developments in the region.

President Mubarak and senior officials saw President al-Asad off at the airport.

Egypt: Musa Says Coming Summits 'Important' for Arab Coordination

NC0206152196 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1400 GMT 2 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa said that the forthcoming summit meeting between President Husni Mubarak and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad and the tripartite summit in al-'Aqabah involving President Mubarak, Jordan's King Husayn, and Palestinian President 'Arafat are part of the Arab contacts and coordination that is now as much needed as it was in the past and will continue to be in the future.

Musa said that the forthcoming summit meetings, and the Arab contacts that will follow them, are important at this particular time, which requires coordination and preparations for a stand that bolsters the peace process and insists that this process should be balanced, fair, and based on the principles agreed on and the agreements reached.

Egypt: Papers View Summit, Netanyahu's Policies

NC0406095696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0530 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 4 Jun (MENA)—The main headlines of the Cairo papers today highlight the outcome of the Egyptian-Syrian summit between Presidents Husni Mubarak and Hafiz al-Asad. The papers' headlines focus on the agreement by Presidents Mubarak and al-Asad to continue their efforts to unite the Arabs and their assurances that a just and comprehensive peace is their objective. The papers also focus on their statements that it is wise to wait and see the new Israeli Government position. The papers also highlight President Mubarak's statement that we are working to hold minisummits until we get to an expanded one.

In their editorials the papers comment on the Egyptian-Syrian summit, the tripartite summit to be held tomorrow in al-'Aqabah with the participation of President Mubarak, Jordan's King Husayn, and Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, Arab solidarity, and the new Israeli Government's positions on the peace process.

In an editorial entitled "The Egyptian-Syrian Summit and the Peace Challenge," AL-AHRAM writes that

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the summit between Presidents Mubarak and al-Asad restates the importance of Arab consultations and quick action to confront successive changes in the region with a united position. It stresses that the Egyptian-Syrian summit followed the Israeli election in which Likud Party leader Binyamin Netanyahu was chosen as the next prime minister, and emerging fears in several Arab and other capitals that this would slow the peace process. It then says: Egypt and Syria most probably prefer to bide their time and wait until Netanyahu is given enough time to complete the formation of his government and decide on the policies the Israeli Government will follow on the peace process. By biding our time the Egyptian and Syrian leaderships will have an opportunity to study these policies and the statements that will come from Israel during that time.

AL-AHRAM adds that all the parties in the Middle East want and seek peace, that there are peace agreements between Israel and both Egypt and Jordan, and that everyone is waiting to see the same thing happening on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks. It stresses that not one Arab party is ready to relinquish its national rights. Egypt, it notes, has retrieved all its territories in Sinai, and this is the example followed by Jordan and the Palestinian people. All the Syrian stances essentially express the same thing, and this applies to Lebanon too.

The paper then says: Even supposing that Israeli Prime Minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu will adopt the most hardline positions, he has already declared his commitment to peace. A sober reading of the Israeli election result shows that those who voted for Netanyahu or his competitor Peres want peace and that the question concerned how to achieve it.

AL-AHRAM then stresses: Israeli Prime Minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu cannot stand alone against the tide that wants peace. There are limits to Netanyahu's hard line that he cannot cross, otherwise he will face severe difficulties, both in the Knesset and with the Israeli public. It adds: The major powers in today's world, represented by the United States, Russia, the European Union, Japan, and China, are sponsoring the peace process in the region. All these powers agree on the view that peace in the Middle East is the best way for guaranteeing their major interests in the region.

The paper goes on to say: There is no force, not even in Israel, that can publicly declare it rejects peace. There might be difficulties, problems, and obstacles but they are all part of the challenge facing the peace process.

The paper says hope is pinned on the will of the region's peoples and their governments proving their ability to respond to this challenge by taking more steps along the peace course.

On the tripartite summit among President Mubarak, King Husayn, and President 'Arafat, AL-JUMHURIYAH says in its editorial today that the summit, which will be held in al-'Aqabah tomorrow, confirms the importance of Arab coordination and consultation to confront the changes in the region. Under the headline "The Summit of Arab Consultation," the newspaper adds that the tripartite summit will discuss changes and developments in the region's political arena, particularly regarding the peace process after Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu's victory as prime minister and an analysis of his speeches and contacts, whether during his election campaign or after his victory.

The paper notes Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa's confirmation that meetings and discussions among the Arab leaders lean toward a strategic Egyptian policy represented in working on strengthening Arab coordination, since it is a basic requirement that needs some work to realize further efforts and continuity.

The paper says extensive Egyptian contacts will continue after the Cairo and al-'Aqabah summit to realize this vital coordination and invest it in convening an Arab summit that restores Arab solidarity and defines strategy, whether with regard to the just peace talks or development in the region and economic and cultural cooperation.

The newspaper AL-AKHBAR stresses the need for minimum Arab solidarity to support the Arab negotiators in confronting the new Israeli negotiators. The paper points out that this cannot happen unless we put the brakes on the normalization process the rhythm of which has recently stepped up.

The paper says in its editorial today that it is not important only for the Arab leaders to meet, but to make practical decisions to respond to the Israeli voters and address practical messages to the new rightist government led by Netanyahu that peace, and peace alone, is the only way and its price is something everyone must pay.

The paper expresses its hopes that the Arab efforts that started recently will realize the goals expected of them. It points out that it is not at all strange that Egypt, the leader of the Arab world, should take its place at the heart of these efforts represented in speedy political moves.

The paper says that those who shoulder the responsibility of resisting the occupation inside the occupied territories should be supported, whether in southern Lebanon

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or inside the Palestinian territories, which are still under occupation.

AL-AHRAM says in another comment that despite new Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu confirming that the peace process will continue and that he, personally, is committed to continuing the negotiations on which he expressed his good intentions, his remarks are neither enough nor comforting.

The newspaper says that continuing the peace process and the negotiations is an essential point that no one can go back on, since peace has become a strategic choice for all the region's countries and a major objective of the international powers with vital interests.

The newspaper clarifies that the important point is not the continuation of peace, but the bases on which this peace will continue and the formulas according to which it will progress. It notes that there are many sides in the region that are afraid of the bases for establishing peace in the region.

The newspaper says that if the bases on which peace will be established are the same bases Netanyahu declared during his election campaign, we will have a problem. The paper points out that the same sides fear that the new trend in Israel after the elections will create a negotiating style that will create problems over place and time, placing the negotiations in a tunnel with no light at the end of it.

Egypt: Envoy to Israel on Relations With New Israeli Government

NC0306154996 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1455 GMT 3 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Rafah, 3 Jun (MENA)—Egypt's Ambassador to Israel Muhammad Basyuni stated that Egypt's relations with Israel are normal, though different from other forms of bilateral relations, since their growth relies on making progress in the peace negotiations, particularly on the Palestinian track, which is the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Basyuni told MENA, at the Rafah checkpoint crossing on his way to Cairo today, that Egypt's relations with Israel are governed by several external factors, primarily the march toward peace and the seriousness of the peace negotiations. He pointed out that what interests Egypt is actual progress toward peace, either by the Likud or the Labor Party, since the choice of government concerns Israeli citizens alone.

Ambassador Basyuni added: We want progress to be made on the Palestinian, Jordanian, Syrian, and Lebanese tracks to guarantee a comprehensive solution. He explained that Egypt deals with the existing reality, which is Binyamin Netanyahu's victory. He pointed out that Netanyahu promised to continue the peace march and hold the final status negotiations. He also pledged to develop relations with Egypt in view of the primary and pivotal role Egypt and president Mubarak is personally playing in the peace process. This is the reality we are going to deal with for the next four years, he said.

Ambassador Basyuni said: We are giving the new Israeli prime minister the chance to see what promises he will actually fulfill. In general, he wants real peace and accepts the land-for-peace principle.

The Egyptian ambassador stressed that Egypt is an influential power in the region and its role is clear in seeking a peaceful solution and giving an impetus to the peace process on all tracks, including the Syrian and Lebanese.

He continued: Prime Minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu contacted President Husni Mubarak immediately after his success. This proves the importance of the Egyptian role and the role President Mubarak is playing, since Egypt is the key to the Middle East peace process.

Ambassador Basyuni will report to Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa on Egyptian-Israeli relations and their assessment on the past and present, what has been achieved so far, and Egypt's view of how to deal with the new government in Israel.

Egypt: Bahraini Official Says Security in Country 'Stable'

NC0406094996 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0900 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 4 Jun (MENA)—Following his meeting with President Husni Mubarak today, Bahraini Education Minister 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Fadil said he handed President Mubarak a message from Bahraini Amir Shaykh 'Isa in reply to the president's message to the amir on developments in the peace process. He added that he also handed President Mubarak another message from the amir dealing with bilateral ties and recent security incidents in the Gulf and Bahrain region.

The Bahraini official stressed that security in his country is stable and that there are no problems right now.

On the recent coup attempt in Bahrain and its claim that Iran was "behind the attempt," 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Fadil said: Since incidents in Bahrain started in 1994, we have stressed that covert hands were behind them. All the evidence that confirms Iran's interference in Bahrain's

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internal affairs is complete. This violates every international norm and relations between countries.

The Bahraini official asserted that his country is not hostile to anyone, not even Iran, but events have regrettably proved Iran's interference. He added: Bahrain has taken several measures to guarantee its rights in accordance with international norms. He noted that he briefed President Mubarak on the details of the incidents in Bahrain.

On whether the recall of the Bahraini ambassador from Iran signals the start of the severance of diplomatic ties between the two countries, the minister said: This was simply a measure taken by Bahrain. I was in Cairo when the ambassador's recall came and I do not have the details.

Asked whether Bahrain will urge the Arab countries to take a collective stand against Iran, particularly after its interference in its neighbors' internal affairs, Minister al-Fadil said: It is our duty to publicize the facts about what happened and consult with the Arab countries, especially with Egypt, to brief them on everything that has taken place.

Egypt: Source Denies Kuwaiti Report on Sudanese Proposal to Egypt

NC0206200196 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1932 GMT 2 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 2 Jun (MENA)—An authoritative source has denied a report put out by the Kuwaiti newspaper AL-QABAS on Friday [31 May]. According to the report, Sudan said that it is prepared to settle the Hala'ib issue, recognize Egyptian sovereignty over the area, withdraw the complaints submitted to the United Nations and the Arab League in this regard, and stop demanding the extradition of Sudanese opposition figures living in Egypt. In return, Sudan demanded that Egypt curtail the activity of Sudanese opposition groups in Cairo and stop demanding the extradition of the suspects in the assassination bid against President Husni Mubarak in Addis Ababa.

The source described this report as completely groundless.

Libya

Libya: Al-Qadhdhafi—Attacks on Lebanon Failed To Win Election

LD0106101996 Tripoli JANA in Arabic
0900 GMT 1 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Tripoli, 1 June (JANA) — The brother leader of the revolution has made the following statement to JANA:

"The only important thing in Likud's win and the fall of Peres is that killing children and destroying peaceful cities are no longer acts that can be relied on to win elections. Therefore, our children in Tarhuna and the rest of the Arab world and the children of the Third World can sleep peacefully for the remaining months of the year, in which similar elections — namely, the American elections — will be held and in which human blood and innocent sacrifice would have been needed."

Libya: Delay in Israeli Election Results Called U.S. Plot

LD0106162596 Tripoli JANA in English
1437 GMT 1 Jun 96

[Commentary by JANA international affairs editor]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tripoli, al-Sayf [June] 1, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY — Reports said that the results of the Israeli elections will not be announced now and an announcement in this respect might be delayed until next week.

Commenting on the witholding of he final results of the elections, JANA's editor for international affairs asserted: From monitoring the circumstances which surrounded the announcement of the preliminary results of the elections and the ambiguity which accompied this announcement, it becomes clear that the unusual refrain from announcing officially the results of the Israeli elections came as a result of something which was cooking for more than 24 hours during which a great deal of bargaining and concessions were taking place especially that the American President put all his weight behind terrorist Peres and the results of these elections have links with the American elections which the American President will wage in the Month of al-Harth [November] this year.

The editor added: Thus, the announcement of the result, which was in favour of terrorist Netanyahu, must be suspended and postponed to allow further bragaining which might be going on about the monetary, material or political price.

But the pretext of waiting for the votes, cast at embassies and elsewhere, to be counted will not fool anyone.

Concluding his commentary, JANA's editor for international affairs stressed' considering that we are a disinterested party in these elections hence we are not interested about who will win or not win, but what interests us is to expose the falsehood of the elections and their non-democratic nature.

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Sudan

Sudan: Spokesman Denies Accusations of Support for Ugandan Rebels

AB0206131896 Khartoum SUNA in French 1614 GMT 1 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Khartoum, 1 Jun (SUNA) — The spokesman of the Armed Forces Major General Muhammad 'Abd-al-Qadir, has denied accusations circulated by news agencies, citing Ugandan leaders who have accused the Sudanese Armed Forces of supporting Ugandan rebels against the Ugandan Government. He described the Ugandan accusations as baseless allegations against Sudan, asserting that the allegations were being repeated to attract the sympathy of the public international opinion.

The heavy losses inflicted on the Ugandan troops should not be a pretext to accuse Sudan of (?involving itself) in the fighting, the Sudanese Armed Forces' spokesman indicated.

Moreover, he accused the Ugandan Armed Forces of pounding the border location of Kaia (south) for three consecutive days, using their allegations as the pretext. He said the attacks against the Ugandan Army were indeed being carried out by residents of northern Uganda who are known for their Christian fanaticism and who belong to the group known by the name of the Lord [Resistance Army]. The spokesman of the Sudanese Armed Forces asserted that the Sudanese Armed Forces would repulse any advance by the Ugandan troops into the national territory, as they had done in the past.

Sudan: Senior Official Says Ready To Meet Garang

EA0206184996 Khartoum SUNA in French 1609 GMT 1 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Khartoum, 1 Jun (SUNA) — The secretary general of the Supreme Council for Peace, Mr. Muhammad al-Amin Khalifah, has said he is prepared to meet John Garang anywhere and any time to discuss the political charter for peace and to bring about whatever could serve the country's interests.

In an interview for AL-SUDAN AL-HADITH daily published on Saturday [1 June], Mr. Khalifah went on to say that contacts were being made by the Supreme Council for Peace with Garang through the mediation of Kenya and a number of Sudanese nationals both at home and abroad. [passage omitted]

Sudan: Defected Rebel Leader on Charter, Differences With Garang

AB0206200796 London BBC World Service in English 1705 GMT 2 Jun 96

[From the "Focus on Africa" program]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Two leading members of the southern Sudanese rebel movement are now comfortably settled in Khartoum after agreeing to sign the government's political charter for the south. Riak Machar and Carabino Kuany Bol were the first southern leaders to come out in favor of the document and defect. Well, in recent weeks, rumors have been circulating about Carabino being seen wearing a Sudanese Army uniform and he took the opportunity of an interview with our reporter, Alfred Taban, to try to squash those rumors. Alfred asked Carabino first what he'd been up to since the signing:

[Begin recording] [Bol] My duty is now to oblige our people to support the political charter in order to stop the war in the Sudan.

[Taban] Have you been successful in doing that?

[Bol] Of course, I have been successful in doing that. Our people are now mobilized and support the political charter and the process. People are now working in order to lead us to reach a final peace in the Sudan.

[Taban] And when do you think that final peace might be achieved?

[Bol] There is nothing that comes just without work. People are now working day and night to see to it that everything has been put right.

[Taban] You have been seen at least once in army uniform with the rank of major general. Have you been reinstated into the Sudanese Army?

[Bol] I am not wearing.... [pauses] I am not called major general but I am called commander Carabino. This is my title and the insignias that have been seen and I am wearing, these are all our insignias. In fact, we inherited these insignias from the Sudanese Army and we have been ever since in the Sudanese Army so when I am seen there is [no] difference, the uniform is the same, anyway. So I am not wearing Sudanese insignias. These are our insignias.

[Taban] So you are still wearing the uniform of a rebel.

[Bol] Exactly, I am a rebel. I am still commanding the rebels and the agreement is not signed.

[Taban] Your critics say you will return home essentially to get arms to fight John Garang because he im-

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prisoned you for several years. Are you still bitter with Garang and is it true you are preparing to fight him?

[Bol] The problem was not a problem of Carabino and Garang. We have already settled that problem. Why we took arms was the problems of the southern Sudan we have been complaining since our independence. So I have no problem with Garang. If he attacks me, then we have to fight because Garang is serious about his leadership. He does not want his leaders to be challenged. If he fights me then we'll fight. I am not looking for him. I have returned home and I am sure [words indistinct] that and I am doing okay. The reason why we took arms, I am after it, and I am now working day and night to see to it that there is a final peace.

[Taban] What exactly have been your problems with Garang?

[Bol] What I know of this is that our differences were true. That he was a communist and he was running our movement as a one-man show was our serious difference. [sentence as heard]

[Taban] In the protocol that you signed with the government there is a provision for referendum after an interim period. Do you think if the southerners choose secession, the Sudan Government will allow that?

[Bol] Why not? This is what is called real freedom and in the charter we said exactly that the war has to stop and then people have to negotiate. For instance, if the southerners choose to secede from the Sudan then this is their own right. Nobody can reject that. [end recording]

Sudan: SSIM, SPLA Clash; SSIM Says Ethiopian Army Supporting SPLA

AB0306174196 London BBC World Service in English 1505 GMT 3 Jun 96

[From the "Focus on Africa" program]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Now, the signing of the Sudan Government's political charter for the south by Riak Machar, leader of the South Sudan Independence Movement [SSIM], looks like increasing tension between his SSIM and their SPLA [Sudanese People's Liberation Army] rivals. Machar used to be a comrade in arms of the SPLA's leader, John Garang, but the two split five years ago, and Machar established a stronghold in south-eastern Sudan, near the Ethiopian border. Well now, according to Machar's spokesman David de Chand, there have been bloody clashes between the two factions at Pagak, but SSIM claim they still hold the town. On the line to Nairobi, Josephine Hazely asked Mr. de Chand how heavy the fighting was.

[Begin recording] [de Chand] The first attack was not very serious. It was a raid. They attempted to raid [words indistinct] us, and they killed one of our guys at that time, and they wounded two, and we killed some of them, and then they came again on 30 [May] and attacked us and we fought them for two hours, and because our people were not organized, we reorganized and after two hours later, we took over our area. So, the fighting seems to be calm now in Pagak area, and we are in full control, as far as I know.

[Hazely] Well, it seems like it didn't take you long to get rid of them. Are you seriously saying it was that easy to push them out or defeat them?

[De Chand] Yes, it was very easy because we know the terrain. We know that the people in the area do have our support. In this fight, we know that they are being pushed by the Ethiopian Army. They are being pushed by the Eritreans. They are not coming alone.

[Hazely] You are also claiming that you seized a number of their equipment.

[De Chand] Yes, we have got a very large number of their equipment — all their logistics, radio communications, weaponry, and other things — and more details will be coming in. One of their commanders.... [pauses] We have captured the personal effects of their commander, and we don't know his whereabouts but we cannot confirm his condition until we get.... [pauses] When we finish with what we call the mopping up operation in the area so that those that might have gone astray — and many of them have gone astray anyway in a hostile terrain — then we will be able to know exactly what happened to their commander, but we know so far we have captured all his effects like clothing, insignia, and radio communications, and other communications, and logistics documents so far.

[Hazely] And you claim that because this area of fighting, this Pagak area near the Ethiopian-Sudan border.... [pauses] You claim that perhaps the SPLA is getting some help from the Ethiopian authorities?

[De Chand] Yes, definitely. We have concrete evidence to that. We know that when they fought north of us in a place called Yabus, Khawr Yabus, we know that the Ethiopians got involved, and I know that when they fought in Pochala, in Eastern Upper Nile, the Ethiopians also got involved in those fightings. So, it means that the Ethiopians are the ones doing the fighting for the SPLA.

[Hazely] But your saying that the Ethiopians are helping the SPLA is not proof enough. You have to tell us what evidence you have for saying so.

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[De Chand] Okay. Sometime ago, when John Luk was in Wad, we captured armaments, and we captured ammunition, and we know that the Ethiopian's helicopters do ferry and supply ammunition to the SPLA, and we know that we captured some documents. Almost all the equipment used by the SPLA have the bearing of an Ethiopian Army and Eritrean Army. So, we know that. [end recording]

Sudan: Ethiopian Refugees Begin Returning Home

EA0306111096 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 0800 GMT 1 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Ethiopian refugees have begun going home from the eastern states. The third group returned to Ethiopian territory the day before yesterday, according to Mr. Mubarak Farhah, the eastern states assistant commissioner of refugees. He said that to date 2,053 refugees had been transported under the program. His excellency said efforts were being made to transport all those who had registered to return voluntarily. It is worth mentioning that this program is being implemented in accordance with the tripartite agreement reached between the Sudanese and Ethiopian Governments and the [UN] High Commissioner for Refugees.

Sudan: Al-Bashir Receives Rebel Defector

EA0306111996 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 2 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The president of the Republic, Staff Lieutenant General 'Umar Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir, today received in his office at the Republican Palace, a returnee from the rebel movement and chairman of the free intellectual politicians' grouping, Kawach Makuei, the former Sudan People's Liberation Army lieutenant colonel. The occasion was witnessed by Mr. Mubarak Qasmallah Zayid, the general manager of the National Development Institute, and Mr. Musa Sid Ahmad, the director general of the Supreme Council for Peace.

In a media statement, Makuei said the government's determination to resolve the southern problem had persuaded a number of rebel leaders to return to the homeland.

Mr. Musa Sid Ahmad said the political peace charter had provided a new opportunity for peace, created trust and activated the peace process. He announced that steps would be taken to tackle the problem in a manner which would give expression to the aspirations of the people of the southern states.

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Bahrain

Bahrain: WAKH Reports al-Mutawwa' News Conference

JN0306150796 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1355 GMT 3 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 3 Jun (WAKH)—Muhammad Ibrahim al-Mutawwa', Bahraini minister of cabinet affairs and information, announced that the Council of Ministers held an extraordinary session today to discuss the security developments in the country and the Bahraini security organs' announcement of the existence of an organization with foreign links. In a news conference held at noon today, al-Mutawwa' noted that the statement issued by the Council of Ministers at the end of its extraordinary session contains a number of decisions aimed at safeguarding the country's security and stability.

Al-Mutawwa' said that, as a result of the arrest of a group of people affiliated with this organization, the security organs discovered a plot to undermine the country's security and stability. He added that confessions by the group in front of the interrogating judge completely convinced him of the circumstances of the situation.

The minister of cabinet affairs and information stressed that Bahrain has always sought to build good relations with all its neighbors, provided that these relations are based on noninterference in the country's internal affairs.

He said: We hope that neighborly Iran will heed the importance of dealing with its neighbors on the basis of respecting their sovereignty and not interfering in their internal affairs. He reaffirmed that Bahrain has always used to and will continue to use dialogue and contacts so that its relations are based on noninterference in other countries' internal affairs.

Al-Mutawwa' said that his highness the amir of Bahrain sent a number of envoys to Gulf Cooperation Council states, Egypt, and Syria to brief the leaders of these states on the situation, because Bahrain's security is linked to the security of these countries.

Bahrain: Leaders of Group Accused of Coup Attempt Named

NC0406105696 Paris AFP in English 1017 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Manama, June 4 (AFP)—The leaders of an Iranian-backed group charged with trying to overthrow the Bahraini government were identified on Tuesday [4 June] but two of them were reported to be still at large.

Two leaders of the military wing of Hizballah-Bahrain were named as Jasim Hasan Mansur al-Khayah and 'Ali Ahmad Kazim 'Abd-Ali, both Bahrainis who were now in jail, the AL-AYYAM newspaper said.

Both were in charge of liaising with Iranian intelligence services, said the newspaper which reflects the official view.

But the authorities are still looking for the leaders of the military training and information branches of Hizballah Bahrain, Khalid al-Shu'ala and Khalil Sultan, both Bahrainis who were reported to be overseas, AL-AYYAM said.

Al-Shu'ala headed the section which trained recruits at Pasdaran camps in Iran and Hizballah camps in Lebanon, AL-AYYAM added.

AL-AYYAM said there was a fourth branch involved in politics and a fifth aimed at recruiting women, but gave no details.

The main leader of the group was not named, and an investigation continues.

"The general plan of Hizballah-Bahrain is aimed at recruiting 3,000 people who will form the group's military force and train them to take power and set up a pro-Iranian regime," AL-AYYAM said.

Information Minister Muhammad Ibrahim al-Mutawwa' said Monday that the authorities seized "light weapons" smuggled into Bahrain and arrested 29 people who confessed last month to founding "The Military Wing of Hizballah-Bahrain" in Iran's holy city of Qom in 1993.

Iran and Hizballah Bahrain "have been plotting together since early 1993, eighteen months before the current disorder began, to undermine Bahraini security and stability," al-Mutawwa' said.

The Bahraini government is recalling its ambassador from Tehran, Sami al-Mu'ayyid, and reducing its representation there to the level of a charge d'affaires, al-Mutawwa' said.

Iran has denied the accusations.

Since December 1994 at least 22 people have been killed in anti-government unrest led by Shiite Muslims demanding a restoration of parliament suspended in 1975 by the Sunni Muslim-led authorities.

Bahrain: Freedom Movement Denies Allegations of Iranian Backing

LD0306152296 Tehran IRNA in English 1503 GMT 3 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] London, June 3, IRNA — The Bahrain Freedom Movement refuted the latest

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allegations Monday [3 June] by Information Minister Muhammad al-Mutawwa' of a pro-Iranian conspiracy to mobilise opinion against the domestic unrest in the country. "The pro-democracy movement doesn't need arms and doesn't need foreign backing for achieving the legitimate aims of the people of Bahrain," it said in a statement issued from its London office Monday.

The opposition group suggested al-Mutawwa's announcement that "29 Bahrainis" had confessed to planning to "topple" the ruling family and establish an Iranian-style government was orchestrated last week by the Information Ministry, when it alerted journalists about Monday's so-called "important announcement." The alleged conspiracy was the "last game" to be played by the ruling family, said the opposition, but it warned there was "no running away" from its accountability in accordance with the constitution, referring to its campaign for the restoration of parliament.

Its statement said the Bahraini government was using the language of force and mishandling the 18-month crisis by fostering a culture of violence. The strategy of the Bahraini authorities, it said, had always been a desperate attempt to derail the constitutional movement by inviting violence to the scene.

The ruling family will realise the Bahraini public is much more advanced than the tribal mentality that depends on the use of force, the Bahrain Freedom Movement concluded.

Bahrain: Opposition—'Foreign Support' Not Needed To Achieve Aims

NC0306153296 Paris AFP in English 1442 GMT 3 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nicosia, June 3 (AFP) - A Bahraini opposition movement said Monday [3 June] it could achieve its aims without weapons and foreign support, but stopped short of denying allegations of an Iranian-backed plot to overthrow the government.

"The pro-democracy movement doesn't need arms and doesn't need foreign backing for achieving the legitimate aims of the people of Bahrain," a spokesman for the London-based Bahrain Freedom Movement (BFM) said.

Bahrain's Information Minister Muhammad Ibrahim al-Mutawwa' said Monday authorities arrested a group of Iranian-trained Islamic militants who allegedly plotted a revolution against the government.

"This alleged conspiracy is the last game to be played by the ruling family," the BFM spokesman said in a statement from its headquarters.

The ruling Khalifah family cannot run away from broad based demands for the restoration of the parliament which was suspended in 1975, he said.

"The ruling family will realize that the Bahraini public is much more advanced than the tribal mentality that depends on the use of force," the spokesman said in a statement.

Bahrain has been hit by anti-government unrest since December 1994 led by Shiite Moslems demanding a restoration of the parliament suspended by the Sunni Moslem-led authorities.

At least 22 people have been killed in the violence.

In Manama, al-Mutawwa' said 29 people had confessed last month to a judge here that they belonged to a group called Hizballah Bahrain, founded in the Iranian holy city of Qom in 1993.

Bahraini authorities also seized light weapons linked to the plot, he said after what he described as an emergency cabinet meeting.

The group trained "under the guidance and with the full financial and resource backing of the Iranian authorities and the intelligence department of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps," al-Mutawwa' said.

Bahrain: Officials, Dignitaries, Citizens Renew Allegiance to Amir

JN0406105896 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0800 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Manama, 4 Jun (WAKH) — His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, amir of the State of Bahrain, received a large group of citizens at al-Rifa' Palace this morning. The citizens came to greet his highness and renew their pledge of allegiance. They expressed great appreciation for the efforts being made by his highness's government to maintain stability and security in the country. They also denounced the sinful attempts by some treacherous people who wanted to disrupt the security of this dear homeland.

The citizens renewed allegiance to his highness, pledging to God and the homeland to devote all of their efforts to serving their dear country. They said they will stand united against any threats to their country.

The beloved amir expressed his great thanks to the citizens, saying he was deeply touched by their sentiments. The citizens sincerely and honestly expressed their allegiance and love for this homeland. His highness, may God watch over him, praised the solidarity of the people and government in their efforts to thwart seditious schemes and plots that tried to destabilize the country.

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His highness said he hopes for a better future for our country, thanks to the efforts of its loyal sons.

The beloved amir also received His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, the prime minister, and His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin-'Isa Al Khalifah, heir apparent and commander in chief of the Bahrain Defense Force, who came to congratulate him on the discovery of the vile terrorist scheme. They wished the amir continued good health and happiness as he leads Bahrain toward further progress and prosperity and protects the country's development process and cultural achievements.

The amir also received the ministers, the speaker and members of the Shura Council, the under secretaries of the ministries, dignitaries, senior civic and military officials, directors of national institutions, businessmen, and a large number of people from the Arab, Islamic, and foreign communities in Bahrain. They all congratulated the amir on the discovery of the vile conspiracy that targeted beloved Bahrain. They denounced and condemned this terrorist scheme, beseeching God to protect the wise leadership of Bahrain against any harm and grant his highness the amir continued good health and happiness in pursuit of the development drive in the dear country. [passage omitted]

Bahrain: Envoy Leaves With Messages for Egypt, Syria, Jordan

JN0306171696 Manama WAKH in English 1634 GMT 3 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Manama, 3 Jun (WAKH) — Bahrain Education Minister 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Fadil left this morning for Egypt and Syria and Jordan.

He was delegated from H.H. the Amir of Bahrain Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah to convey written messages from H.H. the amir to the leaders of these countries.

He was seen off by the Ministry of Education's assistants, undersecretaries, the Egyptian ambassador to Bahrain, Sami Mahmud 'Ismat, the Jordanian ambassador to Bahrain, Shakir 'Abd-al-Hamid 'Arabiyat, and other senior officials in the Ministry of Education.

Bahrain: London Paper Details 'Iran-Backed Coup' Attempt

MS0406095596 London THE TIMES in English 4 Jun 96 p 13

[Report by Christopher Walker: "Bahrain Arrests 29 in Move To Foil 'Iran-Backed Coup'"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The tiny shaykhdom of Bahrain, the Gulf's main financial centre and base for the U.S. Fifth Fleet, yesterday announced that it had foiled an Iranian-backed coup attempt and arrested 29 of the plotters, some trained by extreme Islamic Revolutionary Guards in Iran and Lebanon.

The alleged bid to overthrow the minority Sunni Muslim Al-Khalifah family, who have ruled Bahrain since the late 18th century and are known for their pro-Western stance, came amid an 18-month mass uprising by the Shiite Muslim majority, ring-leaders of which have also allegedly received backing from the Government of President Rafsanjani in Tehran. Nearly 30 people have died in the bombing and rioting which has seriously destabilised the expatriate community, which includes thousands of Britons.

Muhammad Ibrahim al-Mutawwai, the Information Minister, said Bahrain was withdrawing its Ambassador from Tehran in response to the attempted coup, which he claimed had been designed to stage an armed revolution and install an Iranian-backed revolutionary regime.

Western diplomats said a coup attempt had serious implications because of the danger of any unrest spreading across the causeway which links Bahrain to the Shiite-populated eastern province of Saudi Arabia and from there throughout the oil-rich Gulf. The Saudis have been giving Bahrain extensive military support in its battle to subdue the unrest, which has been stirred by Iranian rabblerousers and by shocking living conditions in the Shiite villages scattered all around Manama, the gleaming capital.

"A serious conspiracy has been uncovered which reveals that an organisation known as the military wing of Hezbollah-Bahrain, together with the Iranian authorities, has been plotting since early 1993 to undermine Bahrain's security and stability," the minister said. "The movement's main aims are to stage an armed revolution to overthrow the Bahrain Government by force and to replace it with a pro-Iranian regime."

Mr Mutawae gave a warning that the group behind the alleged plot, a previously unidentified wing of Hezbollah (Party of God), the organisation backed by Iran in its fight against Israeli targets in occupied southern Lebanon and abroad, may be still active. He said that all 29 of those arrested were native Bahrainis and some had been picked up while trying to return to the country.

The minister said the suspects had confessed last month and had detailed their links to Iran, which in the past has repeatedly denied any connection with the Bahraini unrest. The riots centre around demands for a return of the parliament disbanded by the Sunni rulers in 1975.

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Mr al-Mutawwai said the organisation had been founded in the Iranian holy city of Qom in 1993 "under the guidance and the full financial and resource backing of the Iranian authorities and the intelligence department of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards".

The simmering revolt among the underprivileged Shiites of Bahrain — many of whom allege maltreatment by mercenary security squads recruited from abroad by the ruling family — was sparked in late 1994 when scantily clad fun-runners from among the large Western expatriate community were attacked as they passed the Shiite Muslim villages.

Since then, the campaign has escalated with bomb attacks against three luxury hotels, against restaurants used by expatriates and against shopping areas in Manama. There have also been frequent attacks on a wide variety of state-owned targets in the Shiite villages where black flags now hang over many of the squalid houses in memory of the self-styled "martyrs" of the riots, which have now become an almost nightly occurrence.

On a recent trip, I found clear evidence of collusion with Iranian elements among the leadership of the Shiite revolt. But at the same time, the natural resentment of the Shiite underclass provided Iranian recruiters with ready support. The lavish skyscrapers and opulent villas of the ruling class are in marked contrast to the stinking, shabby Shiite villages.

The Gulf Co-operation Council [GCC], of which Bahrain is a member, has issued an unusually strongly worded statement against Iran and said that the Islamic republic must not interfere in the internal affairs of GCC states and must not revert to "acts of sabotage and encouraging them". Mahmud Mohammadi, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman, later denied that Tehran interfered in the affairs of other countries and said that it followed a policy of friendly relations.

Bahrain: SPA Carries Report on Iranian Plan To Overthrow Government

LD0306222996 Riyadh SPA in English 1946 GMT 3 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Manama, June 3, SPA — The state of Bahrain said on Monday [3 June] it foiled a pro-Iranian plot to overthrow the government and was recalling its ambassador in Tehran.

Information Minister Muhammad Ibrahim al-Mutawwa' said in a statement the plot aimed to stage an armed revolution to topple the government by force and replace it with a pro-Iranian regime.

"A serious conspiracy has been uncovered which reveals that an organisation known as the military wing of Hizballah-Bahrain, together with Iranian authorities, has been plotting since early 1993 to undermine Bahrain's security and stability," the minister said in the statement.

"The movement's main aims are to stage an armed revolution to overthrow the Bahrain Government by force and replace it with a pro-Iranian regime," he added.

"Twenty-nine Bahrainis have so far confessed to taking part in the subversive plan," he said.

Bahrain's Amir Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah on Monday sent envoys to other Arab states to brief their leaders about the plot and called on the Shoura (consultative) to hold an extraordinary meeting on Tuesday to discuss the government's statement on the security situation.

The Bahraini cabinet also held an emergency session today to discuss the situation and listen to details of the plot from the interior minister.

The Bahraini statement said: "The principal defendants, together with others, founded the terrorist organisation in the city of Qom in...Iran, under the guidance and with the full financial and resource backing of Iranian authorities..."

"Some young Bahraini recruits (who joined) the organisation were subsequently trained on terrorist methods, including the use of weapons and explosives, at Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps camps in Iran before moving to Hizballah camps in Lebanon," the Bahraini statement added.

Bahrain's Information Minister Muhammad Ibrahim al-Mutawwa' told a news conference on Monday that Manama was recalling its Tehran ambassador and would downgrade its representation in Iran to the level of charge d'affaires.

Iran's ambassador in Bahrain had been summoned and was informed of the decision, he added.

A statement issued after an extraordinary cabinet meeting said the anti-government organisation "was planning to overthrow the rule by force and the establishment of a pro-Iran rule".

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Bahrain: Commentary on Iranian 'Interference'

JN0306143896 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1345 GMT 3 Jun 96

["Political commentary on Iran's interference in Bahrain's internal affairs" — WAKH headline]

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 3 Jun (WAKH)— Today's statement by the Interior Ministry clarifies and clearly pinpoints those who wanted to foment sedition in this peaceful country and tamper with its destiny.

We regret the fact that Iran is financing and training these armed terrorist groups, which tried to execute their plans. The objective is to use force to impose a new situation and create a regime that is subservient to another state.

We have always sought cordial relations of cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran based on mutual respect and noninterference in internal affairs. However, the facts of the latest plot revealed by the Interior Ministry provide unequivocal proof that Iran is still pursuing the same policy of exporting the revolution and interfering in others' affairs, something we will not accept or allow in Bahrain.

We are sad and pained to see Bahraini elements getting involved in this scheme, exposing their country to threat of sedition and murdering innocent people. Some may have been deceived. One thing is certain, however: those who participated in planning this action were fully aware of the dimensions and repercussions. This means that they should receive their just punishment in order to protect society from the evil of those who tamper with it and those who encroach on its achievements, unity, and future.

We note with pride and appreciation the great role played by our country's security agencies, which made tremendous and ceaseless effort to pursue the members of this terrorist organization in order to protect the homefront and foil the schemes of conspiracy and treason. We are completely confident that the alert Bahraini people, who adhere to their Arabism, values, customs, and traditions, will always foil any attempts to harm their national unity, fuel sectarian disputes and prejudices to divide the children of the same religion and the same country, and start sedition — the consequences of which are known only by God.

Those who hatch plots in the shadows to harm our people's interests are living an illusion. They are unaware of the deep affiliation and strong sense of responsibility of our great people, who sanctify legitimacy and carry the trust of building the homeland and working for the coming generations with complete loyalty, devotion, and faithfulness.

The Interior Ministry's statement warms our hearts. It shows reason and logic, stating that acts of violence and sabotage are alien to the peaceful Bahraini society and that foreign hands with wicked motives have tried to sow seeds of evil in this good land. However, God has exposed their schemes and has provided faithful men who keep the pledge and responsibility and managed to stop the evil schemes so that Bahrain will remain as it has always been: an oasis of security and stability. This has been made possible by the wise leadership of this country, represented by His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, the beloved amir of the country, may God preserve him; and his highness' prudent government under His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, the prime minister, supported by His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin 'Isa Al Khalifah, the trusted heir apparent.

Kuwait

Kuwait: Bahrain Envoy Conveys Message to Amir

JN0306181796 Manama WAKH in English 1635 GMT 3 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Manama, 3 Jun (WAKH) — Bahrain Minister of Labor and Social Affairs 'Abd-al-Nabi al-Shu'lah arrived here today coming from Kuwait after a short visit in which he delivered a message from H.H the amir of Bahrain Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah to H.H the amir of Kuwait Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah. The message dealt with bilateral relations and current developments in the region as well as issues of common concern.

Kuwait: Prime Minister Expresses Solidarity With Bahrain

LD0306212696 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 2049 GMT 3 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kuwait, 3 Jun — Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah, the heir apparent and prime minister, had a telephone conversation this evening with his brother Shaykh Hamad Bin-'Isa Al Khalifah, heir apparent and commander in chief of the defense force of the State of Bahrain.

Shaykh Sa'd stressed, during the conversation, the State of Kuwait's support for and its total solidarity with its sister state of Bahrain in all circumstances.

During the conversation views were exchanged on the latest developments in the Gulf and Arab arenas in addition to other issues of mutual interest.

Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah today had a similar contact with Shaykh Khalifa Bin-Salman Al Khalifa, prime minister of the State of Bahrain.

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Oman

Oman: Bahraini Minister Arrives With Message for Qabus

JN0306153896 Manama Radio Bahrain Network in Arabic 1430 GMT 3 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Transportation Minister His Highness 'Ali Bin-Khalifah Al Khalifah arrived in Muscat today on a two-day visit to the Sultanate of Oman.

In a statement to the OMANI NEWS AGENCY, his highness said that he is carrying a message from His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, the amir of Bahrain, to his brother Omani Sultan His Majesty Qabus Bin-Sa'id. The message deals with fraternal relations and the latest developments in Bahrain.

His highness was received by Communications Minister Salim Bin-'Abdallah al-Ghazali and the Bahraini ambassador in Muscat, Shaykh Muhammad Bin-'Ali Al Khalifah.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: Bahraini Foreign Minister Departs After Visit

LD0306201696 Riyadh SPA in English 1954 GMT 3 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jeddah, June 3, SPA — Bahraini Foreign Minister Shaykh Muhammed Bin-Mubarak al-Khalifah left Jeddah this afternoon.

He was seen off at King 'Abd-al-Aziz international airport by Dr Mosaad al-Eban the state minister and member of the cabinet, a representative of the royal protocol and Khaled al-Mosallam the Bahraini ambassador to the kingdom.

United Arab Emirates

UAE: Bahraini Envoy Conveys Message to Shaykh Zayid

JN0306172396 Manama WAKH in English 1637 GMT 3 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Abu Dhabi, 3 Jun (WAKH) — The United Arab Emirates' [UAE] President Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan received a written message from H.H the amir of Bahrain Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah.

The message was conveyed by Bahrain Minister of Transportation Shaykh 'Ali Bin-Khalifah Al Khalifah during his meeting with Shaykh Zayid in al-Wathbah rest today. Following the meeting, the minister of transportation said in a statement that he extended the greetings of H.H the amir and his wishes of health and happiness to the president and UAE's people as well as further developments and progress to the UAE.

The message dealt with the deep-rooted bilateral relations between the two countries and peoples and recent developments in the Gulf region in addition to issues of common concern.

The minister praised in the statement the strength of the relations between the two countries which is increasing its progress under the leadership of H.H the Amir of Bahrain Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah and his brother the President of UAE Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan.

Shaykh 'Ali pointed out the honorable role played by Shaykh Zayid in serving the issues of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Arab and Islamic nations and his keenness to enhance the brethren and cooperation relations between the two countries and expressed his hope for further achievements and progress to the UAE under the leadership of UAE's president.

Present were UAE Premier Shaykh Sultan Bin-Zayid Al Nuhayyan, and the representative of UAE president Ahmad Bin-Khalifah al-Suwaydi, the minister of the state of finance and industry, and acting transportation minister Ahmad Humayd al-Tayir, the director of ports Shaykh Sa'id Bin-Zayid Al Nuhayyan, the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Shaykh Nuhayyan Bin-Mubarak Al Nuhayyan, the head of the UAE's president court Shaykh Dhiyab Bin-Zayid Al Nuhayyan and Bahraini ambassador to UAE 'Isa Muhammad al-Jami'.

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Iraq: Al-Anbari Interviewed on UN Oil-for-Food Deal

JN0406104696 Baghdad INA in English 1010 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, June 4, INA — Head of the Iraqi delegation to the dialogue with the U.N. Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari has stressed that Iraq is about to finalise a plan for the import and distribution to be discussed with the U.N. General Secretariat.

The conditions of the Iraqi people and the economic movement of the market will witness a major improvement following the arrival of goods and foodstuff to Iraq, he added.

In an interview with AL-QADISIYAH daily on Monday [3 June], he said Iraq is ready to sign oil contracts to export oil to the world's market as soon as the concerned committee in the Security Council finishes the required procedures to implement the memorandum of understanding between Iraq and the U.N.

Al-Anbari pointed out the deal between Iraq and the U.N. is the way towards the complete lifting of the embargo on oil export in accordance with Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687 and alleviate the embargo's conditions imposed on Iraq's civilian imports according to Paragraph 21 of the same resolution.

Al-Anbari went on to note that at the end of the six months which the memorandum of understanding covered in the economic side, members of the Security Council will have the chance to reconsider this Paragraph in particular .

He noted for the first time a new form of relations between Iraq and the Security Council in which the vital interest and the basic principles of the Iraqi stands must be taken into consideration.

The implementation of the deal will open new horizons for the trade dealing depending on the common interests in accordance with the international competitive conditions with all oil and trade companies in the world, whether they are in USA or in Europe or any other Asian countries.

Iraq: AL-THAWRAH Analyzes U.S. Attitude Toward Oil Deal

JN0306205996 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0850 GMT 3 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 3 Jun (INA)—The newspaper AL-THAWRAH describes the U.S. position on the Iraqi-UN memorandum of understanding as a preemptive move designed to frustrate the agreement.

In an analysis here today, the paper, which speaks for the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, adds that, in remarks on 23 May, the U.S. State Department spokesman mentioned resolutions other than Resolution 687, even though these resolutions have nothing to do with this resolution. The U.S. spokesman was indirectly reacting to statements issued in Paris, Moscow, Cairo, and other capitals that welcomed the memorandum of understanding.

These capitals deemed the memorandum an interim agreement dictated by the Iraqis' humanitarian needs and believed that this agreement should be implemented without undermining Iraq's sovereignty and national unity. They also believed that this should not be a substitute for the UN Security Council's implementation of its commitments, as enshrined in Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687. They viewed the memorandum as a prelude to the complete revocation of the Iraq sanctions.

The paper adds: While explaining his country's position toward the memorandum of understanding signed between Iraq and the United Nations, the U.S. spokesman repeated allegations regarding missing Kuwaitis and spoke about the abnormal conditions the U.S. Administration created in southern and northern Iraq, in violation of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

AL-THAWRAH continues: Through this preemptive move, Washington wanted to obscure a host of facts, chief among which is the fact that it is high time the sanctions were lifted. The implementation of the oil-for-food deal will show the entire world the extent of the damage the United States has inflicted on Iraq, deliberately destroying the country's infrastructure and the requirements of survival, thus causing the death of some 600,000 children and 750,000 adults.

The paper adds: Awareness of these facts will prompt a thorough international understanding of the statements by Muhammad Zijari [name as transliterated], coordinator of UN affairs and relief aid in Iraq, who said on 24 May that Iraq's basic requirements of food supplies this year are worth $2.7 billion, that the repair of drinking water networks requires several billions of dollars, and that there is an urgent need for medicine worth $500-700 million, not to mention the urgent need to rehabilitate electricity networks, water purifiers, and hospitals.

AL-THAWRAH says: Given these facts and figures, the entire world will pose a legitimate, logical, and humanitarian question on how all these requirements can be secured when Iraq will only be allowed to export $2 billion-worth of oil every six months, 30 percent of which will go to UN coffers.

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The paper adds: The proper and immediate answer to this dilemma lies in the immediate lifting of the sanctions, because their perpetuation means the continuation of criminal genocide against mankind by the U.S. Administration.

The paper continues: Washington's attempt to forestall the ramifications of the implementation of the memorandum of understanding is also aimed at preventing the world from discovering the ulterior motives of the U.S. Administration when Resolution 986 was passed last year.

AL-THAWRAH addresses the connection between the upcoming U.S. elections and U.S. intransigence over the sanctions, which have undermined the destiny of the Iraqi people, on one hand, and Washington's attempts to preclude an agreement between Iraq and the United Nations, on the other, saying that the U.S. Administration sought to use the sanctions to its own advantage as an election card. It was worried that the Iraqis' patience and their leadership's shrewd handling of UN resolutions and honest dealing with the world body would rob it of this card.

In its analysis of the adverse U.S. attitude toward the memorandum of understanding between Iraq and the United Nations, the newspaper says that Washington's overriding concern was to turn the oil deal into a purely humanitarian gesture, even though it is insufficient to meet the Iraqis' needs, which is clear to even the simplest of minds.

Iraq: Agricultural Accords Signed With France, Other Countries

JN0306193096 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1550 GMT 2 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 2 Jun (INA)—Iraq signed agricultural agreements and contracts with a number of sisterly and friendly states. These agreements and contracts will help achieve national food security and overcome the circumstances of the unfair blockade imposed on our steadfast people. This was announced by Agriculture Minister 'Abd-al-Ilah Hamid at a news conference at the Agriculture Ministry today.

He said that agreements and contracts have been signed with governments, establishments, and agricultural societies in Algeria, Vietnam, France, and Russia. He said the concerned quarters have started to implement some of these agreements. Meanwhile, talks continue on other contracts in light of the requests and offers recently received by Iraq, he remarked.

He added that these agreements and contracts provide for supplying Iraq with various machines and equipment, such as harvesters, husking machines, water pumps, and various agricultural needs. Under the contracts, he said, spare parts and maintenance will be provided, and training courses for agricultural technicians will be organized. He added that exchange visits by scientists and experts between Iraq and these states will also be made, especially in the field of seed production and implementing programs to develop various agricultural products, such as rice farming and modern farming methods to secure high yields of crops essential to the Iraqi diets.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Ilah Hamid said his visit to Vietnam last week resulted in the signing of a memorandum of understanding and an agreement to implement the national program to develop rice farming in Iraq and to benefit from Vietnamese expertise. He said that Vietnam also agreed to supply Iraq with special equipment to process the rice crop and organize an exhibition of this equipment in Iraq. He said the two sides will cooperate on irrigation and exchange expertise and visits over a three-year period, during which experiments will be conducted on high-yield and high-quality types of rice that suit Iraq's climate and soil.

He indicated that the Iraqi agricultural delegation's visit to France last month resulted in the signing of contracts with French agricultural societies and companies with technical expertise. He said visits will be exchanged between Iraqi and French agricultural specialists to acquire the scientific methods and modern technology required to produce various agricultural crops and increase productivity.

He explained that the ministry received an official invitation for a number of Iraqi agricultural experts to attend an international seminar on genetics in Germany this month. The seminar will be organized by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization.

In the news conference, the minister stressed the Iraqi leadership's eagerness to maintain the relative subsidy for agricultural products, even after the circumstances of the unfair blockade are removed. He indicated that this decision is irreversible and will be a fixed policy in the future.

He said that the ministry will work to develop livestock wealth, relying on the barley and corn crops. He said that the ministry will reactivate the poultry projects and will increase the number of sheep and cows.

He added that the ministry has prepared a plan to obtain the highest yield per donum from various agricultural crops by providing agricultural requirements and increasing the amount of fertilizers.

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Iraq: Ship Containing Imported Rice Arrives at Umm Qasr Port

JN0306205796 Baghdad INA in English 1040 GMT 3 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Al-Basrah, June 3, INA—A cargo ship loaded with rice has arrived at Umm Qasr Port on Sunday [2 June]. The cargo is imported for Iraq's Trade Ministry and preparations for unloading it have begun.

Iraq: Opposition Radio on Explosions at Air Base

NC0306150296 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi People in Arabic 1400 GMT 3 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraqi opposition sources have reported that the Iraqi air base in Tikrit was the scene of a series of explosions last week. They said that the explosions continued for about 20 minutes and hit seven aircraft, including Sukhoi—22, Mig—23, and a helicopter. A number of rockets and military equipment were destroyed in the explosions. These sources added that Iraqi Chief of Staff Lieutenant General 'Abd-al-Wahid Shannan immediately went to the scene, along with a number officers of the special security force, which is led by the tyrant's son Qusayy.

Iraq: Government Deports Iranian Families to Kurdish Areas

NC0306174796 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1600 GMT 3 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In the context of its chauvinist policies, the Iraqi regime has deported 30 Iranian families from al-Ramadi to the liberated areas of Kurdistan after seizing all their possessions. These families were among those which emigrated to Iraq during the eight-year Iraq-Iran war.

The newspaper KURDISTAN NWAY said that the expelled families, whose members arrived in Kifri yesterday, said they had been treated cruelly and brutally by the regime's henchmen.

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Israel: Netanyahu, Peres Meet, Do Not Discuss Unity Government

TA0406102796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated text] Prime Minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu and outgoing Prime Minister Shim'on Peres conferred in private at the prime minister's bureau this morning. They discussed security issues and transfer of power procedures. Following the meeting, both men said that they did not discuss a unity government.

Netanyahu said he wanted to hear about the Hebron issue and that he would be happy to confer with Peres in private in the future.

Netanyahu is now meeting with U.S. Ambassador Martin Indyk.

Israel: Netanyahu—Forming Government May Take Longer Than Believed

TA0306152996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1400 GMT 3 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Prime Minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu says Arab and Western countries understand that the Israeli public has asserted its desire for the peace process to continue based on the Likud's policy. Dan Meridor, expected to be appointed a cabinet minister, says there is still no decision on whether to redeploy in Hebron. David Ze'ev reports:

[Begin recording] [Ze'ev] The Likud-Gesher-Tzomet faction met in the Knesset and toasted Binyamin Netanyahu's election victory. Netanyahu himself said he would go out on a limb and say that there is even a generally positive reaction in Arab and Western countries to the new Israeli policy. He maintains that, following a detailed conversation with Egyptian Ambassador to Israel Muhammad Basyuni last night, it was clear that Egyptian President Husni Mubarak is ready to cooperate with the new Israeli leadership.

Yesterday, the outgoing Israeli cabinet said it would be up to Netanyahu to redeploy Israeli troops in Hebron by around the middle of this month. Dan Meridor, widely viewed as a certainty to receive a cabinet post, says there is no decision yet on the Hebron issue.

[Meridor] The new Israeli government will have to discuss all outstanding issues, including the issue of Hebron, and when we discuss it and reach an agreement, I suppose you'll not be the last to know.

[Ze'ev] Netanyahu said a secure peace is more than a campaign slogan and that it will now be an objective of his government. Knesset Member Moshe Qatzav said coalition negotiations had begun. After meetings with different parties, Qatzav said there would be internal consultations after which the potential coalition partners would be contacted again. Netanyahu said he did not know how long forming a coalition would take.

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 1400 GMT on 3 June reports that Netanyahu told the Likud faction that "it may very well be that the formation of the government and the consolidation of the coalition might take longer than we thought." In a recorded passage, Netanyahu says: "I don't know how long it will take, and I don't want to limit ourselves. We have 45 days. We may have to use a considerable fraction of this time or perhaps all of it."]

Meridor said the Likud-led government would try to reach a broad consensus within the coalition on pending legislation concerning basic laws aimed at forming a constitution, where religious sensitivities have — at least at times — clashed with secular values. [passage omitted]

Netanyahu repeated his theme today of national reconciliation despite, he said, any sharp differences which are bound to exist between the government and the opposition. He said the current policy guidelines are broad and will be formulated in greater detail once a coalition is set up. In the meantime, he called on his colleagues to refrain from comments which deviate from the existing platform.

In Washington, they were waiting for a meeting to be set up here between Netanyahu and U.S. Ambassador to Israel Martin Indyk. At least some eyebrows were raised when the prime minister-elect chose to meet with the Egyptian ambassador first. Netanyahu's spokesman said as far as he knew, there was no meeting scheduled yet with the U.S. ambassador, even though the Americans have requested one. Over the weekend, the Americans invited Netanyahu to visit Washington once he forms a coalition. He was also invited today by the French president and the Canadian prime minister to visit those countries. [end recording]

Israel: Politicians React to Unity Government Proposal

TA0406080796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0700 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President 'Ezer Weizman has conferred with outgoing Prime Minister Shim'on Peres at his residence. Mr. Peres told our correspondent Yitzhaq Feller that they did not discuss the setting up of a unity government. Peres said that since Binyamin Netanyahu is setting up the government, if he has any intention of establishing a national unity coalition he

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will initiate a meeting with Labor. Prime Minister-elect Netanyahu will meet with Mr. Peres in half an hour in a talk aimed at discussing the proper transfer of government.

The following are several views on the establishment of a unity government. Knesset Member [MK] Yitzhaq Shamir said that there is a need for a national unity government due to the domestic and international situation. Major General (Res.) Yitzhaq Mordekhay said that the government can be expanded only after the partners to the Likud's path are guaranteed their places, but he believes that if Labor adjusts its positions, the expansion of the government should not be rejected. Mordekhay believes Netanyahu will keep for his movement the foreign affairs and defense portfolios.

NRP [National Religious Party] MK Yitzhaq Levi believes that if Netanyahu proposes that Labor join his government before setting up a coalition with his initial partners, it will be a violation of the promises made to the electorate.

Labor MK Hagay Merom rejected Minister Yosi Beilin's stand in favor of a unity government, saying the ministers would move to the opposition whether they like it or not. Merom said the Labor ministers forum has finished its job and that the time has come to return decisionmaking to the party forums or to set up new bodies in a democratic fashion. He said all the ministers are directly responsible for the election failure.

MK Ra'anan Kohen, chairman of the outgoing coalition, rejected the establishment of a unity government, saying it would be a government of paralysis. He said it is Labor's duty to sit in the opposition benches and serve its voters.

Israel: Shuval—National Unity Government 'Possible,' Views Peace

BR0306144096 Rome L'UNITA in Italian 1 Jun 96 p 15

[Interview with Zalman Shuval, Likud's foreign relations chief, by "U.D.G.," in Jerusalem; date not given: "New Mediator: No to Palestine"—first paragraph L'UNITA introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] Jerusalem — From now on the Palestinian and Syrian negotiators will have to deal with him, Zalman Shuval, former Israeli ambassador to Washington and currently the Likud Party's foreign relations chief. Benjamin Netanyahu's personal adviser, Zalman will be the Israeli Foreign Ministry's new director general. In this interview Ambassador Shuval revealed the center-right government's foreign policy guidelines.

[L'UNITA] Before entering the labyrinth of foreign policy, there is a domestic political matter of prime importance in Israel at the moment, immediately after the elections — the possibility of a national unity government comprising both the Likud and the Labor Parties. Do you consider such a prospect a realistic one?

[Shuval] Possible, yes, but I would not say probable. Indeed, the Laborites would have to say that they are willing to accept certain substantial changes of line that we do not [as published] intend to make to the conduct of the peace process. At the moment absolute priority must be given to the quest for a program agreement with the forces that supported Netanyahu's candidacy to the prime ministership.

[L'UNITA] You talk about "substantial changes" to the conduct of the negotiations. What do they consist of?

[Shuval] The most profound and substantial of them concerns negotiations with Syria. Damascus demands the return of Golan in exchange for vague declarations of peace, which are gainsaid in practice by the support granted to the Hizballah fighters in southern Lebanon. It is impossible to conduct credible negotiations on this basis. The Syrians at present provide no real guarantees of Israel's security. The Golan Heights are of strategic importance to the country's security. It is too early to talk about their return. We expect real signs from Syria that show a real desire for peace. There have been none yet.

[L'UNITA] What about negotiations with the Palestinians?

[Shuval] I would like to reassure those who fear, or hope, that the Netanyahu government will pursue a kind of "tank diplomacy." Nothing could be further from the truth. With the Palestinians we do not intend to alter what has already been done or to disown the Oslo agreements, but we state equally clearly that we will oppose the very idea of a Palestinian state, and with regard to security and the antiterrorist struggle we will certainly not rely on Yasir 'Arafat.

[L'UNITA] Does that mean that you are prepared to send Israeli troops into the territories governed by 'Arafat to hunt down suspects?

[Shuval] Look, after the latest massacres even Peres said that this is not excluded by the Oslo agreements, but he did not do it. But we will do it, because we are convinced that even though the Palestinian territories are autonomous, they are still part of this country, for whose security we still hold full responsibility. And the

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intransigent defense of national security is the prime reason for our election victory. Apart from that, I repeat: We will honor the agreements already made.

[L'UNITA] Does that mean that you will withdraw from Hebron?

[Shuval] No decision has been made about this yet. It will be necessary to negotiate, but not hastily.

[L'UNITA] What will be the Netanyahu government's first foreign policy move?

[Shuval] To strengthen our friendly ties with the United States and to renew to the Arab leaders involved in the peace process the proposal of holding an international conference on the Middle East at which to take stock of what has been done so far and to formulate new ideas and proposals.

[L'UNITA] During the election campaign Netanyahu promised that he would expel all 'Arafat's men from Jerusalem. Now that you are in government, do you intend to close down Orient House (the PLO's unofficial headquarters in Jerusalem — L'UNITA editor's note) by force?

[Shuval] We merely intend to ensure proper observance of the provisions of the autonomy agreements themselves: The PLO cannot conduct any political activity in Jerusalem. If cultural events are held at Orient House, there will be no problems. Otherwise we will be forced to act in the most resolute manner.

Israel: Peres 'Has Not Ruled Out' National Unity Government

TA0206043896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 2 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Outgoing Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has not ruled out the possibility of a national unity government if a serious offer is made from the Likud. Sources close to Peres told Qol Yisra'el that at the same time, Peres does not want Labor to back a government dominated by the Likud, NRP [National Religious Party], and the haredi [ultra-Orthodox] parties.

Israel: Netanyahu Opposes Suit for New Elections; Ruling Due 5 Jun

TA0406102596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prior to tomorrow's High Court of Justice deliberations on the issue of the white ballot slips disqualified in the elections, Prime Minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu petitioned the court to reject the appellants' charges.

In his counterpetition, Netanyahu said that judicial rulings, the law, logic, and integrity require that the High Court not consider the appeals. He said that, like in a marathon, once the race for voters' support ends, the rules of the game cannot be changed to extend the route.

Our correspondent Mikha'el Tuchfeld reports that the five High Court justices will have to decide tomorrow if the white ballot slips should be added to the overall number of votes. If the justices rule in favor of the appeal, it would mean that neither candidate received 50 percent of the votes, as required under the election law. In such a case, there would have to be another round of elections.

Israel: Sharon Said To Threaten To Quit if Not Given Senior Post

TA0306154196 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1400 GMT 3 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Tension has been mounting between Ari'el Sharon and Binyamin Netanyahu over the question of Sharon's appointment as finance minister. In a private conversation, Sharon told his associates that if he is not given a senior cabinet portfolio, he will resign his Knesset seat and quit politics. Likud sources accuse Sharon of exerting unfair pressure on Netanyahu. Our correspondent Baraq Ronen reports:

[Ronen] Prime Minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu has a problem with one of his party's most senior members. Ari'el Sharon has been exerting heavy pressure on Netanyahu, demanding to be appointed a senior minister in the emerging cabinet. He wants to be the finance minister, but Netanyahu is hesitant about giving him this portfolio because he is worried that such an appointment might lead to fear and even shock in the business community. Sharon is aware of these hesitations and, according to his associates, he had an unpleasant phone conversation with Netanyahu the night of 1 June. Using tough language, Sharon demanded to be appointed finance minister. According to these associates, Sharon even said later in a private conversation that if not appointed to a senior cabinet portfolio, he will resign his Knesset seat and quit politics altogether.

Netanyahu's spokesman Shay Bazaq denies that such a phone conversation took place, while Sha'ya Segal, Sharon's aide, says he does not know of any plans on Sharon's part to quit politics. Despite the official denials from both sides, Likud sources close to Netanyahu claim that Sharon has indeed been exerting heavy and unfair pressure. According to them, he is trying to consolidate a lobby of prominent businessmen and economists to intercede with Netanyahu in his behalf. They further

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claim that Sharon has been leaking resignation threats to the media in order to scare the Likud leader. The tension between Sharon and Netanyahu is mounting.

Israel: Sharon Interviewed on Hebron, Religion After Elections

TA3105173496 (Internet) 'Arutz 7 News Service in English 31 May 96

[Interview with "former Israeli Minister of Defense" Ari'el Sharon by unidentified correspondent "following the elections"; place and date not given]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Q: Sir, it appears that one of the burning questions at this time is that of Hebron. Is the Likud planning to fulfill the promise of the previous government to withdraw the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] from Hebron?

A: First of all, the answer is surely no. Secondly, I've heard the calls of PLO leaders from Hebron, asking the government to hurry and withdraw before the formation of the next government. In my opinion, that would be most severe, for two reasons: For one, Hebron itself — it is a historical asset of the Jewish People, second in importance only to Jerusalem. And two, a withdrawal would involve great danger to human lives. I hope that the [outgoing] government will act responsibly, and not attempt, together with the PLO, to quickly withdraw now. The Likud has a plan regarding Hebron, which we have made clear: Overall responsibility for security must stay in Israeli hands, while civil administration in most of the city will be in the hands of the Palestinians who live there. In the Jewish parts of the city, from the cemeteries through Tall al-Rumaythah, and the complex of Bet Hadassah-Bet Schneersohn-Bet Romano, to the Courtyard of the Mequbalim, and the Avraham Avinu synagogue, from the eastern casbah and through to Qiryat Arba' — all of this should be annexed to Qiryat Arba'. This is the plan that will be enacted by the Likud.

Q: You were in charge of the haredi sector in the Likud campaign. How do you plan to repay them for their strong support in the elections?

A: First of all, I would like to thank the haredi sector that really went all out, on a scale that I simply don't remember seeing ever before. Especially to Habad, whose thousands of volunteers....

Q: I can hear the happiness in your voice.

A: I happen to have strong bonds with the haredi sector for many years now, not on electoral or coalition considerations, but rather on my personal feelings — and their recognition of such — that I am first and foremost a Jew, and that the thing that most interests me is the Jewish People — what will happen to us in 30 years, and in 300 years, and in 3000 years.

It was a most captivating and interesting experience to meet with what are truly the nation's leading Torah scholars. It is too bad that the secular sectors do not really know the haredim. My meetings with them were fascinating; they discussed many issues, from politics and security, to aliya and the problems of emigration from Israel, and even the problems of drugs and crime — all this on the background of their desire to deepen the Jewish aspect of our society. The secular think that they only come with demands; true, they have demands — Habad, for instance, demanded very forcefully that we carefully guard the integrity of the Land of Israel — they had no other demands. They would like to see more teaching of Bible, Jewish history, history of the Land of Israel, etc., in order to deepen our connection with the Land and our Jewish identity. At no point in our discussions did the subject of passing religious legislation changing the status quo arise. The subjects centered around issues that are pertinent to the entirety of Israel.

Q: MK Sharon, thank you.

A: I would like to thank you at 'Arutz-7. As opposed to most of the Israeli media, and most of the commentators and broadcasters, who acted, unfortunately, as if they were hired by the Labor Party, you stood and gave balanced coverage presenting also the nationalist point of view, and this is also part of the victory.

Q: You're making us all blush here. Thank you again.

Israel: Plan To 'Greatly Expand' Jewish Development in East Jerusalem

TA0206112196 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 2 Jun 95 pp 1-2

[Report by Bill Hutman]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A group of Jerusalem activists have already devised a plan to greatly expand Jewish development in Arab sectors of the city under a new government led by Binyamin Netanyahu, THE JERUSALEM POST has learned.

The 15-point plan by the Jerusalem Forum includes building Jewish housing projects in the Ra's al-'Amud neighborhood, in the City of David section of Silwan, and on the Mount of Olives next to the Bet Orot Yeshiva, in the al-Tur neighborhood.

Jerusalem Deputy Mayor Shmu'el Me'ir (National Religious Party), who heads the Jerusalem Forum, came

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up with the plan together with Mati Dan of Ateret Kohanim, and David Be'eri of El'ad — groups that promote Jewish settlement in Arab neighborhoods — and other forum members.

The plan also touches on other areas in addition to Jewish development — calling for the immediate closure of Orient House and 50 other Palestinian offices allegedly connected with the Palestinian Authority in the city, and the eviction of Palestinian security agents from Jerusalem.

"We have been preparing groundwork for years for the time when a government that truly supports Jerusalem as the eternal capital of the Jewish people would come to power," Me'ir told THE POST on Friday [31 May].

Me'ir said the plan, which includes a call for Israeli sovereignty to be expanded to include Ma'ale Adumim, Giv'at Ze'ev and Betar, would be presented to Netanyahu early this week.

"We already own much land and many homes in East Jerusalem, but have waited until now to take them over because of the former government's opposition," Me'ir said.

A major part of the plan is road expansion in East Jerusalem. The Jerusalem Forum is demanding the construction of the East Jerusalem beltway, Route 45 linking the coastal plain with north Jerusalem, and a tunnel under Mount Scopus.

The plan also calls for the construction of the Har Homa neighborhood, the controversial project in southern Jerusalem held up for years because of Palestinian opposition and legal battles. The neighborhood is aimed at creating a continual stretch of Jewish development between Gilo and East Talpiyyot.

Me'ir and the settlement activists are also calling for the completion of the Western Wall tunnel, held up for years because of opposition by the Waqf, the Moslem religious authority that runs the mosques on the Temple Mount.

Me'ir said the group anticipated a Netanyahu victory, and once it looked certain on Thursday, it met to finalize the plan, aimed at strengthening Israel's hold on the city.

Israel: Various Figures Named Possible Ambassadors to Washington

TA0206114996 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 2 Jun 96 p 7

[Report by Hayim Shibi]

[FBIS Translated Text] Netanyahu's victory has given rise to various rumors regarding the identity of the next Israeli ambassador to Washington. The main candidates are those who are known in the United States as "the gang of three:" Yosi Ben-Aharon, Yoram Etinger, and Yig'al Karmon.

The "three" are members of the right-wing lobby in Congress, which has received considerable support among the American Jewish community. The three spent considerable time in congressional corridors attempting to convince Congress members to change their opinion on various issues.

Among other things, the "gang" tried to prevent decisions regarding the transfer of funds to the PLO and the Palestinian Authority, and were involved in information activity against a withdrawal from the Golan Heights. Israeli sources in Washington guess that one of the three will reap the fruits of victory and will win the ambassadorial slot in Washington.

Other names raised as possible candidates for the post are Moshe Arens, Salay Meridor (brother of Knesset member Dan Meridor), Netanyahu's political adviser Dr. Dore Gold, Dani Nave (who is one of Netanyahu's advisers), or Zalman Shoval, who has already served in the post during Yitzhaq Shamir's term in office.

Israel: Ramon Urges Dialogue With Religious Elements; Sarid Blames Baraq

TA0106124896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 1 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Minister Hayim Ramon says that if his party continues to be beset by animosity and rifts, it will still be sitting on the opposition benches in the year 2000. Harmony among the party's upper echelons is vital for its ability to act as a serious opposition and a viable alternative to the Likud. Speaking with our correspondent this morning, Ramon further said that Labor must pursue a dialogue with religious elements who are interested in a partnership with Labor — most notably SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim] — and avoid a war of cultures.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1000 GMT on 1 June adds that Knesset Member [MK] Ra'anan Kohen has said he will run for the job of Labor Party secretary. He noted that the Labor Party must reorganize its institutions, present new ideas, and start preparing for the elections in 2000. MK Kohen believes that the Labor Party must change its strategy and renew its historic alliance with the religious and the ultra-Orthodox, while eschewing its present partnership with Meretz. This was reported by our correspondent Yo'el Nir.]

Minister Yosi Sarid says that Operation Grapes of Wrath was one of the reasons for the defeat in the elections.

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Sarid accused Minister Ehud Baraq of being responsible for the military action, which he termed a stupid operation. He added that although some Labor officials are looking for jobs, a national unity government would be an inappropriate solution.

Israel: U.S. 'Open Intervention' in Elections Seen 'Improper'

TA0206111296 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 2 Jun 96 p 6

[Editorial: "Netanyahu's Challenge"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Now that the counting of the votes has ended, congratulations are in order to premier-elect Binyamin Netanyahu. What he has wrought is the most stunning political upset in Israel's history, surpassing even the 1977 toppling of the Labor government. Thanks to the new election system — whose passage was made possible by Netanyahu's vote in defiance of his own party — he is now the first Israeli leader to receive a direct popular mandate and an outright majority.

What must please Netanyahu most is that despite the very close vote, he led Prime Minister Shim'on Peres by more than 11 percent in the Jewish population. Since the central issue in this election has been the security, size, and future of the Jewish state, this is a significant fact. The result should help stem the trend against the state's Jewish identity.

Israel is a Jewish state, not just a state which happens to have a Jewish majority. That Labor officials such as Deputy Education Minister Mikha Goldman have suggested changing the national anthem and even the flag to accommodate the country's non-Jewish citizens may have had something to do with the repudiation of the Labor government.

Netanyahu must be pleased, too, by his success in overcoming the most formidable array of world leaders and media pundits ever mobilized to help an Israeli politician. Particularly untoward and improper was the U.S. Administration's open intervention in an ally's democratic election. In a move as unprecedented as it was distasteful, President Bill Clinton implied — most likely on the advice of the Middle East team he inherited from the Bush administration — that a vote for Netanyahu was a vote against peace. His ambassador in Tel Aviv has been acting — as one of the most prominent Jewish American leaders put it yesterday — "more like Peres than Peres." The Netanyahu victory may suggest that the American interference was not only improper, but unwise. At least some Israelis resent being treated as citizens of a protectorate.

A much more positive note was struck by Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole, who said after the elections, "With so much focus on the democratic process in Israel, a central fact has been overlooked: The fate of peace in the Middle East is not simply up to Israel. In Israel, both major parties and both candidates support peace. They have different approaches, but their goals are the same: A secure Israel living within recognized borders and at peace with all her neighbors. Likud's platform, for example, states clearly: 'Peace will be a central aim of Israel's policy'... I well understand Likud's emphasis on 'peace through strength' and I am confident I can work closely with the next Israeli prime minister."

But Dole's sensible words have been drowned in the quasi-hysterical chorus of anti-Netanyahu voices, and many seem to believe that his election bodes the end of the peace process. If anything, the opposite is true. The government's plans have included allowing the establishment of a Palestinian state in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza, the division of Jerusalem (the blueprints for which have been developed by Labor's "100 day team"), and the complete evacuation of the Golan. Such steps would have been a sure prescription for war.

Netanyahu's challenge is to convince the West that hope for peace lies in transforming the region's regimes into democracies, not in appeasing its tyrants. A dozen years ago he was able to persuade Washington to change its policies on international terrorism. One should like to hope that he will be as successful in affecting its policies on the Middle East.

Israel: Commentary Foresees 'Honeymoon' in Relations with U.S.

TA0306101296 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 3 Jun 96 p 6

[Commentary by Avino'am Bar-Yosef: "200 Days of Grace"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The U.S. Administration is perplexed. The horse on which it has staked its bet did not win the race, as hoped. It looks as though the winning horse is young, energetic, talented, and most of all — it looks good on U.S. television.

President Clinton will run for reelection in 6 months. The Jewish element in the U.S. electorate is significant not so much due to its comparative weight (approximately 2 percent of the U.S. population), but because of its ability to provide substantial help for the two candidates' election campaigns. A large percentage of those who helped Clinton during his previous election campaign supported Bibi in the Israeli elections.

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This is the cynical side, if you will, of the new Israeli-American equation. On the substantial side, we must not forget that the United States has heavy investments in the Middle East not merely in political terms, but in the economic sphere as well. The issues at stake do not just revolve around 'Arafat's relations with this or that Israeli leader, but also relate to geopolitical interests which are tied to the region's strategic importance — mainly due to Arab oil.

The key to the preservation of these interests is stability. The present objective is to preserve what has been achieved in the peace process so far, even if future progress will be slower. A negative reaction to the Israeli elections could negatively effect not only the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange, but also Wall Street stocks.

This is perhaps the main reason for the soothing messages sent out over the last few days by the U.S. Administration, which has found itself in a situation in which it has to calm both itself and its Arab partners. When it was seen that Netanyahu was winning the race it was decided not to prejudge him, to give him the opportunity to establish a government and behave moderately. Netanyahu's victory speech yesterday proved to them that the new prime minister is saying the right things.

We must remember that Washington is more used to political turnarounds than is Jerusalem, consequently it is easier for it to find the appropriate phrases for dealing with new situations.

Returning to the cynical angle, it can be said that in anticipation of his election campaign Clinton needs a new set of pictures to feature in his election ads. His pictures with Peres and 'Arafat are unsuitable for the new era. This is why Netanyahu will be a very welcome guest at the White House, and the sooner the better. At least until the U.S. elections in November Israel can expect a honeymoon in its relations with the United States. Therefore, Bibi now has 200 days of grace rather than just 100.

Israel: Peres Speaks of 'Peace Legacy' in Hebrew University Forum

TA0306100096 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 3 Jun 96 p 2

[Report by David Makovsky]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In his first public remarks since losing the election, outgoing Prime Minister Shim'on Peres exhorted all to maintain his peace legacy, warning that the only alternative is bloodshed.

Peres, who spoke at a Hebrew University convocation at the Mt. Scopus amphitheater, was warmly received by the crowd. He seemed genuinely moved by the extended standing ovations before and after his remarks. Some of his aides wept as he spoke.

By stressing the combination of strategic vision and political moderation that has become his signature style, Peres sounded more like an elder statesman offering sagacious advice about the future than a politician having to deal with tomorrow's headlines.

Speaking in somber tones, Peres declared, "I know the road to peace is not simple and is full of mines. But, even if you discover mines, don't lose sight of the horizon, because peace is the only future for our children."

Citing famed writer S. Yizhar who shared the stage with him to receive an honorary doctorate, Peres urged all to weigh the value of a single human life above all else.

Regarding the specifics of the peace process, he said Israel must maintain the peace process with the Palestinians as indispensable for building a partnership. Peres implied the new government headed by Binyamin Netanyahu should withdraw from Hebron, saying, "The government of Israel must honor the political agreements signed by past Israeli governments and continue the path of the Oslo accords in negotiations with the Palestinians."

Concerning relations with Israel's other potential peace partners, Peres declared, "We have to reach an agreement with the Syrians and an agreement with the Lebanese. We don't have a choice and they don't have a choice. The only alternative is bloodshed darkness, and disappointment."

In a dig at his opponent, Peres accused Netanyahu of "zigzags" during the campaign, saying, "I may change my post, but not my positions."

Looking at the recipients of honorary doctorates sitting near him, Peres joked that he has something in common with them, since he could now be called "honorary prime minister."

Aides to Peres say that he has not made long-term plans and since he is dubious of the idea of a national unity government, will stay in the Knesset as leader of the opposition.

Others awarded honorary doctorates yesterday included Harvard University scholar of medieval Hebrew literature and Jewish thought Prof. Isadore Twersky and Hebrew University Bible scholar Prof. Moshe Greenberg.

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Israel: Maj. Gen. Yatom Takes Over as Mosad Head

TA0206050496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 2 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Major General Dani Yatom takes over today as head of the Mosad replacing Shabtay Shavit, who will take up a new position as head of the Maccabi Kupat Holim Sick Fund. Fifty-seven year old Shavit has been head of the Mosad for the last seven years. Yatom served as military aide to both Yitzhaq Rabin and Shim'on Peres. Replacing Yatom as military aide to the prime minister is Maj. Gen. Ze'ev Livne.

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Jordan: King Addresses Graduates on Peace, Iraq

JN0106171396 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1142 GMT 1 Jun 96

[Speech by King Husayn of Jordan at the graduation ceremony of the ninth graduating class of officers from Mu'tah University on 1 June—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Prayers and peace be upon Muhammad, the honest Arab prophet, and upon every member of his family and his companions. Dear brother graduates: I extend to you an Arab, Hashemite salute of pride and confidence and hope for the sacrifice you will offer, after you have drunk from the spring of knowledge and equipped yourselves at this magnificent educational edifice with education, experience, and academic military training, which qualifies you to shoulder your responsibilities and carry out your duties efficiently and capably as officers in the ranks of our brave Armed Forces.

On this blessed day, I am pleased to extend our warm congratulations to you, the graduates of the ninth graduating class of the military wing at Mu'tah University, and also to your families and our one Jordanian family, who are pleased by your graduation and who take pride in you as a group of the homeland's knights and its soldiers who devoted themselves to defending the homeland and its dignity, out of their belief in the principles of this Arab army and in what it has inherited from the army of the Great Arab Revolt in terms of faith in the principles of this Revolt and its noble message and in commitment to the honor and principles of the military such as courage, discipline, capability, and affiliation to this dear homeland. I am confident that you are qualified for all this.

Brother graduates: We are now celebrating your graduation and presenting you to dear Jordan, which is taking pride in the anniversary of Independence Day, a dear occasion on which free Jordanians recall their struggle and their noble national pride and on which their vibrant, pure consciences recall the image of the martyr founder grandfather, 'Abdallah Bin-al-Husayn, who led their march and struggle for the sake of the independence of this genuine Arab homeland and to entrench the foundations of a modern Jordanian State; who was martyred in the courtyard of the holy al-Aqsa Mosque while calling for unity, liberation, and comprehensive Arab awakening; who looked forward to achieving peace and stability in this region; and who realized through his shrewd vision and unprecedented political awareness at that time that this region cannot dispense with peace and that wisdom calls for coping with the causes of the conflict with realism and awareness of its dimensions and its future results. Why did the Arab nation need half a century and several wars and disasters to realize what 'Abdallah Bin-al-Husayn realized?

We pursued the path of peace along with the Arab brothers and within the Arab consensus on this option, proceeding from our firm belief in the right of the peoples of this region to a free, safe, and honorable life and in their right to prepare for future generations. We were able, God be praised, to regain our full rights, and we also offered every possible support to our Palestinian brothers over the years of their long struggle and the stages of the peace march. We will continue to support them and their sole, legitimate representative, the PLO, until they achieve their full rights on their national soil.

We do not have any ambitions in all that belongs to them. We also do not seek in any way to interfere in their internal affairs. In talking about a specific formula for the future Jordanian-Palestinian relationship, we have always said that this talk is premature, and that judging things in advance and discussing the details of this distinguished relationship is not in the interest of either party. The kind of peace in which we believe and seek to achieve is a just, comprehensive, and lasting peace which enables the region's peoples to devote themselves to comprehensive development and to improve their living standards within the framework of stability and a secure and honorable life. It is the peace which is made and defended by peoples faithfully and satisfactorily. Based on this clear panoramic view, we stress the importance of commitment to the continuation of the peace process, and the need to pool all sides' efforts to enable it to achieve its objectives on the other tracks. This is an embodiment of the comprehensiveness of the process which guarantees the aspired lasting and durable peace.

Praise be to God, we have managed to overcome the negative effects of the Gulf war on our relations with some of our Arab brothers. The cloud which overshadowed them has gone forever after it became clear to our brothers that our intentions are good and our objectives are noble in every stand we adopt toward any issue of interest to our nation. We are part of this nation and we support it. We have always been advocates of unity and solidarity among brothers, and advocates of tolerance and of the need to rise above all the small transient differences. This stems from our concern about this nation's interests, resources, and the future of its generations.

Regarding sisterly Iraq, our concern and main objective has always been to safeguard its unity, cohesion, and sovereignty over its full soil, as well as to end the suffering of its people, regardless of the source or form

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of this suffering. We have no designs or ambitions in all this. All we hope is that dear Iraq will be able to overcome its ordeal and to assume its natural position in the Arab world, and that the Iraqi citizen will enjoy his right to freedom and an honorable life.

Dear citizens: This homeland, the homeland of the emigrants [Palestinian refugees] and the supporters [Jordanian citizens], was established on the values of brotherhood and equality in rights and duties, and on tolerance and the sacred national unity of which we are proud. This unity is one of the main pillars of this country's strength and impregnability. True citizenship necessitates that everyone of the sons of our one Jordanian family should keep away from all that would encroach on this unity or harm its pure image in any way. I said several times that anyone who tries to encroach on this unity will be my enemy until the day of judgment. This is Jordan, the homeland of the Arabs and the sanctuary of the free men of the nation. For me, true citizenship is faith in this homeland and affiliation to it regardless of any other considerations. [applause]

Regarding our democratic process, which we chose as a way of life, an example to be followed, and one of the bright characteristics of this lofty homeland, we must abide by its essence and spirit concerning any controversial issue. Freedom is a responsible freedom whose redline is the higher national interests. Pluralism is respect for the other opinion within the framework of the Constitution, laws, and the genuine national affiliation.

The freedom of opinion and free expression does not mean encroaching on the state's dignity and the symbols of the homeland; nor does it mean taking advantage of the climate of tolerance and democracy to harm the image of this country and belittle its achievements and sacrifices. There is a great difference between objective and constructive criticism, which is based on concern for the supreme national interest, and the defaming and distortion attempts. Pluralism does not mean that a certain party or group should claim to have a monopoly over the truth or to think that it can issue certificates of good patriotism and concern for the national and pan-Arab interest to others.

We built this country, we and our forefathers, through hard work, patience, and sacrifices. Thanks to God and the determination of its sincere citizens, we achieved things that were beyond all expectations. We have the right to take pride in what we achieved, without paying attention to the voices of the skeptics, pessimists, the defeatists, and those who suffer from the complexes of inferiority and despair.

We clearly understand the hurdles and difficulties that obstruct the march of this country which are mainly the result of little wealth and humble resources. We, however, understand at the same time that the educated, qualified, dedicated, and persistent Jordanian individual is our tool and means to overcome these challenges. He is, therefore, the means to achieve development and is its desired objective. We also understand that some sectors of this society suffer from poverty and unemployment. However, I have great confidence in the promising, prosperous future. My confidence in the individual of this country and in his ability to overcome all difficulties and challenges is even greater. In my letter of designation, I charged my government to work seriously to unleash energies, utilize resources, open the horizons for our development march on scientific and objective bases, and remove all the obstacles facing this blessed march. It is now working seriously, confidently, and sincerely to develop the country and improve the life of its citizens. Let us have patience and belief in the bright future. Tomorrow is too close for those who are waiting for it.

Brother graduates: I congratulate you and your families once again. I extend my thanks and appreciation to all the teachers and administrators in Mu'tah university for their distinguished work and for their ceaseless efforts to qualify you and to support our Armed Forces, the Arab Legion, with these successive classes of qualified graduates. Proceed with God's blessings to your positions, the positions of manliness, honor, and belonging. With you and with every member of our single family, Jordan will remain an oasis for freedom, democracy, and respect for human rights. It will also remain proud, dignified, and impregnable to all attempts to encroach on its status and on its ability to work and to sacrifice.

God's peace and blessing be upon you.

Jordan: Al-Kabariti—Changed Regime Should Not Affect Peace Effort

MM0406093296 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 2 Jun 96 p 2

[Interview with Jordanian Prime Minister and Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti by unidentified correspondent in Tunis; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] A major part of the talks you held in Algiers and Tunis was devoted to the issue of clearing the Arab air and preparing an ideal atmosphere for Arab solidarity. What are the most distinguished features of the Jordanian move in this connection?

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[Al-Kabariti] We acknowledge that the Arab League, the home of all Arabs, is the body authorized to work to close the ranks and achieve unity. However, we too are doing our utmost, using the capabilities available to us and King Husayn's friendly relations with his brothers, leaders of the Arab states.

On that basis, Jordanian diplomacy is making moves in all directions and with all the Arab parties in a bid to explain the Jordanian position. We believe that inter-Arab relations are now much better than they were following Iraq's occupation of Kuwait. The Arab atmosphere is now capable of accommodating more meetings and dialogues and expanding bilateral, tripartite, and multilateral meetings.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Jordanian-Syrian relations have recently experienced a state of coolness and tension. Are there any attempts to eliminate this tension?

[Al-Kabariti] We understand and appreciate Syrian interests just as we understand and appreciate all Arab interests. But when we call for cooperation and coordination, it is because we know that cooperation and coordination are the way to achieve a balance among the interests of the cooperating and coordinating parties. Thus we hope that we will be able to restore the channel of dialogue between us and the Syrian side. We feel that a peace agreement between Syria and Israel would open the door to new prospects that would serve the issue of security, stability, and development in the region as a whole.

[Al-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Netanyahu's victory has aroused great concern and alarm in Arab circles over the future of the peace process in the Middle East. What is Jordan's opinion?

[Al-Kabariti] Actually we should not comment on the Israeli people's election of their representatives and government, unless it adversely affects the peace process in the region. We believe that the peace option is now a strategic option for all the parties concerned, Israeli and Arab. We also believe that the efforts being made to achieve the logical results of peace, namely universal, comprehensive, and balanced agreements, will achieve a lasting peace in the Middle East region.

We believe that changing the makeup of a government or replacing state, government, or parliament officials in the states, governments, and parliaments of the countries concerned with the peace process should not affect the serious desire to make every possible effort to achieve peace. I am confident that even if the peace process is affected — negatively or positively — the logical outcome is for us to conclude peace agreements. That might take some time.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] What role can Jordan play to help the Palestinian National Authority [PNA] in the final status negotiations?

[Al-Kabariti] Our stand and role is limited to supporting and backing the Palestinian efforts made by Abu-'Ammar (Yasir 'Arafat), president of the PNA. We are fully willing to do all that is required of us. Jordan will spare no effort to support whatever the PNA believes serves its aim of establishing an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] What about the issue of jurisdiction over Jerusalem?

[Al-Kabariti] Jordan's position on the Jerusalem issue is fixed. It is now clearer than ever before, especially in the light of King Husayn's statements in Cairo, that Jordan's prime concern is for Jerusalem and the holy sites there to be under Arab supervision. If the PNA wants to extend its authority over Jerusalem, it is an honor for us for this Authority to be responsible for defending and safeguarding Jerusalem and providing the services for it.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Finally, what is the status of Jordanian-Saudi relations?

[Al-Kabariti] They are excellent and developing rapidly. I held a meeting recently with a high-level Saudi trade delegation, and the joint ministerial committee will convene in the middle of this month in order to continue to develop these relations.

Jordan: Information Minister Views Netanyahu Election Victory

JN0306084096 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 3 Jun 96 p 25

[Report by Samir al-Hijjawi in Amman]

[FBIS Translated Text] Information Minister Dr. Marwan al-Mu'ashshir said that Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel, which was overwhelming approved by the majority of Israelis.

Commenting to AL-RA'Y on the results of Israeli elections which were a victory for the Likud and Israeli right wing, he said: What is wanted is to reach a comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, and we will do our best to achieve this.

Regarding the Likud's electoral slogans calling for intensifying settlement activity and not withdrawing from the Golan and the West Bank, Dr. al-Mu'ashshir said: We should not be premature in our judgement, because many electoral slogans do not indicate consistent positions. He pointed out that there is no room for talking about halting the peace process.

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Concerning some Likud leaders' calls for obstructing the implementation of the Oslo agreement, Dr. al-Mu'ashshir said: Netanyahu said clearly that the only official statements are those that he himself makes. He added: We cannot take into consideration the statements made by a person here or there. We should wait until the new Israeli Government is formed, and until we see its program.

Jordan: Al-Mu'ashshir on Peace, Tripartite Summit, Other Issues

JN0306183596 Amman PETRA-JNA in Arabic 1655 GMT 3 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, 3 Jun (PETRA)—Information Minister Dr. Marwan al-Mu'ashshir said that Jordan will not be a party to the final-status negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis and that it is not concerned about the Jordanian option proposed by some Likud Party leaders, considering Netanyahu said that the only binding statements are those made by him.

During his weekly meeting with journalists today, he added that real peace guarantees the Palestinian people's legitimate rights and that Jordan deals with the Israeli Government's declared policy, not with slogans.

Regarding the expected summit among His Majesty King Husayn and Presidents Husni Mubarak and Yasir 'Arafat, he said: The summit is open to anyone who wants to attend. The summit will discuss ways to support the Palestinian people during the final-status negotiations.

About Jordanian-Kuwaiti relations, Dr. al-Mu'ashshir said: We hope that the Jordanian Embassy in Kuwait will open soon. Relations with fraternal Kuwait have reached the point where I believe that the Jordanian Embassy will open soon.

Jordan: Press Commentary on Netanyahu Victory

JN0106130596

[FBIS Report] Jordanian dailies on 1 June carry several editorials and commentaries on the victory of Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu in the Israeli elections.

AL-DUSTUR

In its editorial "An Arab Summit To Face the Radical Change," published on pages 1 and 17, AL-DUSTUR says that the results of the Israeli elections have resulted in "a radical political shift that will greatly change Israel's political map over the next four years." The editorial says that although Netanyahu has pledged to go ahead with the peace process, his political proposals will slow it down, "particularly on the Palestinian track, in which the commitments of the phased agreement are supposed to be implemented and in which the final-stage negotiations and their essential issues are supposed to be discussed seriously." AL-DUSTUR says there is an urgent need to revise the Arab position in order "to contain this serious development, which represents the most significant danger to the Arab nation since its defeat in June 1967." The paper calls for "a comprehensive Arab summit to face this danger and its repercussions on the Arab destiny."

In a page-3 article headlined "Revealing the Hidden," writer Fakhri Qa'war says: "Regardless of what some Arab media say, we must know full well that, since the Madrid conference, the Labor government has done nothing except for what is in the interest of Israel, underscoring Israel's presence in the region and legalizing this presence through recognition and its treatment as a natural legitimate entity." Qa'war adds: "Yig'al Amir [assassin of former Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin] represents the basis of Israeli thinking. Peres and his predecessor, Yitzhaq Rabin, are the exceptions. The proof of this is Rabin's assassination and Likud's election victory." The writer concludes that the Arabs must either accept the conditions of the Likud government, "which will be difficult for the Palestinian and Arab citizens to do," or hold an Arab summit to achieve some reconciliation, solidarity, and coordination.

In a page-22 article headlined "The Direct Likud and the Maneuvering Labor," writer Muhammad Ka'wash says while the political parties in Israel have switched places, "nothing about the Israeli position has changed." According to Ka'wash, Israeli society is "a military society and a gathering of warriors." He adds that "there will be no radical change the Likud. The Labor Party stems from the same principles, but with a bit more lenience, maneuvering, and wise deception." The writer contends that there were no differences in Israel's policy under former Likud Prime Ministers Begin and Shamir and former Labor Prime Ministers Rabin and Peres. He says that "the only thing that characterizes the Labor Party is its ability to better serve Israel because it is capable of making friends and obtaining aid."

On the same page and under the headline "Netanyahu's Claims About Jordan," columnist Tahir al-'Adwan says that "Netanyahu's program is aimed at destroying all tracks of the peace process, including the Egyptian, Jordanian, and Palestinian tracks. It reneges on the bases of the Madrid conference, the Oslo accords, and the theory of a comprehensive peace." Al-'Adwan says that "Jordan is also the target of his gloomy ideas, which are hostile to the essence of peace." The writer says that Netanyahu opposes the establishment of a Palestinian

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state because "he claims that Palestine consists of Jordan and Palestine and that there is only room for one Arab country, with its capital in Amman, and an Israeli state, with its capital in Jerusalem."

Columnist Salih al-Qallab reviews the results of the Israeli elections in a page-24 column headlined "Facts Highlighted by the Israeli Elections." Al-Qallab says that the elections show that Israeli society is divided into two camps: "the camp of peace and the camp of rigidness and rejection." The writer adds that the election results show that there is a state of political instability in Israel and that will be exacerbated in the future. The writer calls for "great international efforts" to protect the peace process and give it momentum.

AL-ASWAQ

In its front-page "Follow-Up" column, AL-ASWAQ writes about the "three mistakes" made by Shim'on Peres. The paper says that "had it not been for his fall in the Israeli elections the three mistakes committed by Shim'on Peres would have turned into a long-term cancer in the body of peace which will turn the current treaties into a temporary truce that separates us from another war or a series of subsequent wars." The paper says that his major mistake was that he did not comprehend the fact that the Middle East issue was sparked by "the Jewish question, not the Palestinian question." The paper adds that, after he became prime minister, Peres was not aware of the fact that "Jordan occupies the central point of contact between Israel on the one hand and the Arab depth on the other." Peres, the paper notes, violated the economic and trade agreements both the Palestinian Authority and Jordan. The paper says that his other mistake was his Grapes of Wrath which he carried out to remove his personal complex of not being a military man. He appeared as the "hijacker of the peace plane."

The paper reruns on pages 1 and 17 the approximately 2,000-word article by AL-ASWAQ Chief Editor Mustafa Abu-Libdah published in its 20 May issue under the headline: "Very Personal Viewpoint: Likud's Victory May Save the Peace Process."

The writer says that Jordan is the only country that will feel reassured about the results of the elections, no matter who wins. The Jordanian-Israeli peace will not be affected like others by the victory of the Likud or the Labor, or by the formation of a coalition government in Israel. The other Arab countries, including the cordon states and the oil states, are forced to follow up the Israeli elections.

The writer then speaks about the tripartite summit in Cairo and notes that "the only Arab party that will be affected negatively by the victory of the Likud is President Yasir 'Arafat's leadership." He adds that Syria and Egypt hope that Likud will win the elections because of the Labor Party policies and the Operation Grapes of Wrath in southern Lebanon. U.S. support for the Labor Party aims at receiving Labor's support for Clinton in the U.S. elections.

The writer says that European officials, who are disturbed by Peres' stands, agree in their private meetings that if the Likud wins it will give the peace process what the Labor failed to give. The Europeans are convinced that the return of the Labor Party to power will push the peace process down alleys of lenience, selfishness, hesitation, and consequently obstruction. The Likud is the only party that can save the peace process and lead it firmly and quickly to its clear objectives. This is because it has the power and courage to spread international investments throughout the region. It also possesses farsightedness that makes it more capable and quicker than the Labor to remove the obstacles on the path of the economic agreements with Jordan and Israel.

In an editorial on page 19 entitled "Confronting Netanyahu's Win By the Trilateral Understanding and Pan-Arab Solidarity," the newspaper AL-ASWAQ says: "Binyamin Netanyahu's success in becoming prime minister for the next four years augments the importance of the understanding, cooperation, and coordination which Jordan, the Palestinian National Authority, and Egypt are seeking. It also asserts the importance of the engagement of other Arab parties in this understanding..."

The paper says: "It is no secret that Netanyahu's win is a victory for the Israeli intransigence toward the issue of peace on the Palestinian and Syrian tracks in particular."

It adds: "No Israeli government can remove the achievements that were made or return the region to the previous situation. The success of the Jordanian-Palestinian-Egyptian understanding in working out a clear program for cooperation and coordination will set the proper ground for a more solid and stronger position against any measures or decisions the new Israeli prime minister may take — decisions and measures that may reflect negatively on the peace process."

AL-ASWAQ maintains: "The victory of the Israeli extremists in the Israeli elections does not mean that the peace process will stop; the Madrid conference was held when the more radical Shamir was prime minister."

AL-RA'Y

In an approximately 300-word editorial on page 31 entitled "There Is no Alternative to the Continuation of

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the Peace Process," AL-RA'Y says: "There are many interpretations of the outcome of the Israeli elections. This outcome either reflects the Israelis' desire to effect a change in the helm of power or marks a return to the state of reclusion and giving precedence to the private interests of individuals and their parochial party organizations. This shows the absence of security inside the group as a whole and a search for personal and sectarian security inside the small and closed groups and small parties, which stole the light from the two mainstream parties."

The paper maintains: "There is a growing feeling in the Israeli society that the decision of peace is imposed on Israel by the international community and, thus, cannot be resisted. This helped broaden the social cracks in the various social segments in Israel, which became preoccupied with their own destiny at the expense of interest in the overall perspective of the future of the Hebrew state amid the current regional and international changes."

AL-RA'Y editorial adds: "This clearly means that .... Jordan believes that Netanyahu's government should develop the Israeli view, which is ensconced in parochial interests, into an awareness of the benefits of a comprehensive, permanent, and just peace. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that the real security of the Israeli people will be realized through security, cooperation, stability, and prosperity of all the peoples of the region within the framework of peace, development, and security for all."

The paper concludes by saying: "Aware of the extent of the collapse in the Israeli social, psychological, economic, and even political structure—as revealed by the Israeli elections—we still hope that the new leaders of Israel will realize that there is no alternative to continuing the peace process..."

In an article on page 28, under the headline "Israel's Radical Change," columnist Dr. Fahd al-Fanik writes: "What happened in Israeli is nothing less than a radical change that took the world by surprise, and nobody was prepared for this change. Although many feared it would happen, they did not want to consider it a possibility worth preparing for."

Al-Fanik adds: "What happened was a referendum of the Israeli people on their position toward peace and normalization with the Arabs. Their answer was no. Excluding the votes of the so-called Arabs in the Israeli society, the decision to reject peace was made by a majority of 55 percent of Jewish voters."

He continues: "With this conclusive decision, the Israelis ousted the man who presented himself as a peace advocate and openly authorized the racist Israeli generals — spearheaded by Sharon, who is not only a terrorist, but also a war criminal; Eytan, who described the Arabs as cockroaches when he was chief of staff of the Israeli army; and their likes — to undermine the peace process and resume the policies of building settlements and Judaizing the West Bank and emptying it of its Arab inhabitants."

He adds: "Luckily, Jordan made its decision and moved at the rightzimtiis, it succeeded in regaining its occupied land and usurped waters and turning the cease-fire lines into international borders. It lost nothing in return." He adds: "However, Jordan should make a drastic reassessment of the situation following the Israeli upheaval and the ascendancy of the military clique to the helm of power in Israel"

He concludes by saying: "The only positive thing in what has happened is that it returned Israel to its previous status, that is, insurrection against the world after the latter almost accepted it as an normal state. The Labor Party did not change the substance of Israel, but rather cast a civilized facade on it. The Likud Party will return Israel to its reality both in form and substance."

Also on page 28, under the headline "What After the Israeli Elections?" columnist Sultan al-Hattab writes: "Given the results of the Israeli elections and the victory of the Likud leader, Israel will witness consecutive domestic splits and violence that will once again confuse the political atmosphere."

He says: "The idea of peace has not yet matured in the Israeli society, which, thanks to the controlled culture, remained hostage to the fortress mentality. To the Israeli right-wing, peace can be made through practicing terrorism and repression, imposing further siege against the Palestinians, shelling the Lebanese people, and threatening the Syrians and other Arabs, who demand, think of, or work for anything against Israel's interests. Therefore, the majority of Israelis think that peace is neither a necessity nor an urgent need. It can be delayed or even bypassed as we heard in statements on the Golan Heights."

Al-Hattab states: "The Likud's well-known platform is destructive to the peace process. If the triumphant Netanyahu does not defend the achievements of his predecessor Peres and instantly continue the peace process to achieve a comprehensive, just, and permanent peace in all the region, the pM98O tHss will collapse—a dear price for the Arabs, Palestinians, and even Israel."

In an approximately 250-word commentary on page 29 under the headline "Bibi's Peace," columnist Ahmad al-Muslih says: "Generally speaking, Binyamin Ne-

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tanyahu's government should adhere to the agreements to which Peres's government was committed..."

He says: "In light of the Likud's principles, which do not acknowledge international legitimacy, and alliances with the radical religious parties, it goes without saying that the peace process will be completely paralyzed until a new atmosphere is created..." He adds: "What consolidates this viewpoint is that the Likud's political platform concerning the final-status settlement with the Palestinians leaves no room for a peaceful understanding or even for a compromise. In sum, the peace process was frozen with the Likud's rise to power. We warn against exporting the crisis to the Arab side. This will create new upheavals in the region that are far stronger than the Gulf War. This should be borne in the mind of the sincere peoples and leaders of the nation before its too late."

JORDAN TIMES

In its editorial on page 6, entitled "Cushion for the Blow," the JORDAN TIMES says that for many in the region, Netanyahu's victory is "bad news, since the Likud-led political and religious groups have adopted such hardline positions on the peace process that is terribly difficult to bridge with the Arab side, particularly the Syrians and the Palestinians." The paper goes on to say that "these are positions that bode extremely ill for the peace process and substantially reduce the chances for reaching an acceptable solution to the Palestine problem." The paper continues: "The crucial question, however, is whether Netanyahu, the prime minister, will assume the same attitudes as those held as the leader of the opposition which has had an interest in discrediting all the policies of the incumbent government.

"Not only common sense but also Israel's real strategic interests would dictate that Netanyahu and his colleagues be humbled by the responsibilities of office and will thus act more responsibly towards issues that affect the future of their country as much as the whole region of the Middle East. Another important factor that is likely to push Netanyahu towards a more moderate position is the weight of the United States which has invested considerable time and effort in the peace process and thrown its prestige behind it."

The paper says "There is no reason to believe that Netanyahu will reverse the peace deals that his country has signed with Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinians. But there is no doubt that Cairo and Amman will reconsider their policies towards Israel if it reneges on its commitments to the Palestinians and does not attempt to strike a compromise with Syria and Lebanon."

Jordan: Oil Minister Discusses Cooperation With Iraqi Counterpart

JN0406101296 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0900 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, 4 Jun (INA) — Hashim al-Dabbas, Jordanian minister of energy and mineral wealth, met with Lieutenant General Engineer 'Amir Muhammad Rashid, [Iraqi] oil minister, today in Amman. Rashid is visiting Jordan on his way to the OPEC emergency meeting convening in Vienna tomorrow.

Rashid told the INA correspondent after the meeting that they discussed bilateral cooperation and ways to develop and strengthen them so that the two sisterly countries' joint interests will be served, especially in the areas of oil and oil byproducts.

Rashid noted that the two ministers discussed Iraq's oil and gas assistance to Jordan with respect to the al-'Aqabah refinery and the Iraq-Jordan al-Zarqa' pipeline, as well as Iraqi expertise in developing oil and gasfields in Jordan, and thus contributing to its progress and development.

Jordan: Iraqi Oil Minister Comments on Stabilizing Prices

JN0406100496 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0850 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, 4 Jun (INA) — Oil Minister Lieutenant General Engineer 'Amir Muhammad Rashid said that Iraq will try to stabilize oil prices and serve the interests of the OPEC countries.

Rashid told the INA correspondent in Amman that Iraq will participate in the OPEC emergency meeting in Vienna tomorrow with a constructive, positive spirit.

He said: The Iraqi delegation will hold talks at the conference with everyone concerned objectively and in a constructive spirit of solidarity to reach this goal.

Rashid hopes that discussions among the OPEC ministers will result in appropriate decisions to maintain and stabilize the oil prices and avoid confusion in the oil market.

Rashid arrived in Amman last night on his way to Vienna to attend OPEC's emergency meeting.

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Jordan: 'Authoritative' Sources See Easing of Tension With Iraq

MM0406083696 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 1 Jun 96 p 8

[Unattributed report: "Jordan Confirms Easing of Tension With Iraq"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — The Jordanian Government has confirmed that it has allowed three Iraqi parties opposed to the Baghdad regime to open offices in the Jordanian capital to undertake political and media activities, and that it will not allow any others in the future, despite receiving requests from 25 parties and organizations. It announced that the borders with Iraq will not be closed and that they are open to Iraqis, without any constraints.

Authoritative Jordanian sources told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti's visit to Nuri al-Ways, the Iraqi ambassador in Baghdad [as published], after he left hospital, was a sign of the easing of tensions in Jordanian-Iraqi relations.

The authoritative sources said that the parties authorized by the Jordanian Government [to set up offices in Amman] are the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan led by Jalal Talabani, the Kurdistan Democratic Party led by Mas'ud Barzani, and the Iraqi National Movement led by Staff Major General Wafiq al-Samarra'i, the former Iraqi military intelligence chief, currently a refugee in Jordan.

The sources added that from now on the Jordanian Government will not grant any more permits to any other Iraqi opposition group, explaining that the Jordanian Government has received 25 requests to this effect, but that it will not allow other Iraqi opposition factions' parties to open political or media offices, in order to prevent the Jordanian arena from becoming a forum for the Iraqi opposition.

The sources added that Iraqi opposition figures residing in Jordan are allowed to do so as individuals, and not because they belong to Iraqi opposition factions, explaining that Jordan does not impose any restrictions on the movement of Iraqis residing on its territory, and that they can leave Jordan at any time.

The sources said that the Jordanian borders are open to Iraqis and that Jordan never thought of closing these borders, not even when bilateral relations were strained and deteriorating badly in the wake of the murders of Jordanian citizens, including students and truck drivers, in Iraq. Also, Jordan economic bodies did not refrain from visiting Iraq during the blockade years, given the economic and trade cooperation ties between the two countries and especially in view of the fact that the Iraqi market attracts many Jordanian goods and products.

The sources stressed that Jordan is committed to the principle of noninterference in Iraq's domestic affairs, pointing out that the fact that Jordan allows significant numbers of Iraqis to reside on its territory is due to national constants and also to political motives.

Jordanian media rhetoric toward Iraq has recently changed and the tension has eased, especially after Iraq and the United Nations agreed on the "oil-for-food" formula to implement Security Council Resolution 986 allowing Iraq to export quantities of its oil to satisfy the Iraqi people's food and medicine needs.

Jordan: Government Reportedly Asks Iraqi Army Deserters To Leave

JN0406104296 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 3 Jun 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-MAJD has learned that the Jordanian Government asked the men who deserted the Iraqi Army and who are residing in Amman to search for new places of residence outside Jordan.

Informed sources told AL-MAJD that the government told dozens of Iraqi soldiers to leave Jordanian territory quickly, but it did not set a deadline.

The sources added that this Jordanian initiative was not a response to any Iraqi pressure, but reflected a Jordanian desire to improve the relationship with Baghdad.

Within the same context, AL-MAJD learned that Major General Wafiq al-Samarra'i, former head of Iraqi intelligence, who recently left Amman for Damascus, chose to make this move by himself to avoid embarrassing the Jordanian Government. He felt that the Jordanian Government intends to resume its previous relations with Iraq.

For the same reasons, Lieutenant General Nizar al-Khazraji, who arrived in Amman in April, has started to contact Saudi officials in order to move from Jordan to Saudi Arabia.

Persons close to al-Khazraji, who feels that Jordan is reluctant to renew his residence permit, which will expire soon, said that Saudi Arabia has agreed in principle to receive him, but no date has been set.

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Jordan: Conflicting Reports on Disappearance of Iraqi Diplomat

JN0406082296 Amman AL-BILAD in Arabic 5 Jun 96 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Iraqi Diplomat Mysteriously Disappears in Amman "]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] There are conflicting reports about the mysterious disappearance of an Iraqi diplomat in Amman who disobeyed Iraqi Foreign Ministry orders to return to Baghdad. Iraqi opposition sources told AL-BILAD that Sa'd Muhammad Rida refused to return to Baghdad, although he had packed up and prepared to leave with consular officer Salim 'Abd-al-Husayn al-Rabi'i, in the company of Iraqi Intelligence Officer Husayn Faraj, who was expelled from Amman.

The sources said Rida disappeared suddenly in Amman after he and his family refused to return to Baghdad. Rida had encountered problems over the past two years because he refused to cooperate with the head of Iraqi Intelligence and refused to obey orders to return to Baghdad. This drove the Iraqi ambassador in Amman to transfer Rida from his position as consul general to the position of an ordinary employee at the embassy's information desk.

The sources added that Muhammad Rida had been cooperating with Iraqi citizens and helping the ones who were being pursued by the Iraqi authorities by renewing and stamping their passports without charging fees that came to 350 Jordanian dinars. [passage omitted]

Contacted by telephone, an Iraqi Embassy official, who did not identify himself, told AL-BILAD that diplomat Sa'd Muhammad Rida was transferred from the embassy to Baghdad, that he did not disappear, and that he reported for duty at the Foreign Ministry.

Jordan: Paper Views Iraqi-Jordanian Relations

JN0206190096 Amman SHIHAN in Arabic 25-31 May 96 p 10

[Report by Faysal al-Malkawi]

[FBIS Translated Text] Over the past few months, Amman and Baghdad have been the center of attention of world capitals and political observers. Jordanian-Iraqi relations witnessed consecutive dramatic developments to the extent that observers posed serious questions, foremost of which was: Will relations between the two countries be strained to the extent of severance of diplomatic ties? What is even more serious is that some quarters predicted and promoted a military confrontation between Jordan and Iraq. They even spoke about an Iraqi military buildup on Iraq's eastern borders with Jordan.

However, without delving into details regarding recent developments in Jordanian-Iraqi relations, SHIHAN learned from well-informed Jordanian sources that a severance of diplomatic relations and a military confrontation with Baghdad was nothing beyond a figment of the imagination of political analysts and some quarters who relentlessly seek to torpedo long-standing Jordanian-Iraqi relations.

The sources said that contrary to these expectations, a Jordanian-Iraqi rapprochement has become almost certain within the next few weeks, especially since the two countries' ambassadors returned to Amman and Baghdad. The two ambassadors consulted with their governments in preparation for restoring normal bilateral relations.

During the past few months, the Jordanian Government refused to open more offices for Iraqi opposition factions, despite the fact that it received many requests to this effect. Only one Iraqi opposition office was licensed in Amman.

A high-level Jordanian official asserted to SHIHAN that the Jordanian statements made over the past few months came against the backdrop of the accelerating events in Iraq. He said these statements were perceived as a drastic shift in the Jordanian position toward Iraq. The source went on to say that the observers of Jordanian-Iraqi relations noted that these statements stopped when these events came to a halt. In an exclusive statement to SHIHAN published several weeks ago, Information Minister Dr. Marwan al-Mu'ashshir said that Jordan is keen on continuing and developing its economic relations with Iraq. At the same time, statements by Jordanian officials indicated that the trade protocol with Iraq was reduced for economic and not political reasons.

In this context, and amid the positive signs made by the Jordanian and Iraqi Governments in favor of relaxation of Jordanian-Iraqi relations, SHIHAN learned from well informed sources that Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti visited Iraqi Ambassador in Amman Nuri al-Wayyis after the latter underwent surgery following his return from Baghdad.

The sources said the purpose of the prime minister's visit with the Iraqi ambassador was to inquire about his health and to congratulate him on the success of the surgery. The source added that the prime minister only wished the ambassador a speedy recovery and did not speak about other issues.

The sources said that although the visit seemed to be one of protocol, it was made at a time when all signs

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indicate that a positive and sudden change in bilateral relations will take place soon. The sources also said that the Iraqi ambassador seemed to be encouraged by al-Kabariti's visit and thanked the Jordanian Government for this initiative.

The most important development in Jordanian-Iraqi relations was the meeting last week between Dr. Sa'dun Hammadi, speaker of the Iraqi National Assembly, and Bassam Qaqish, the Jordanian ambassador in Baghdad. SHIHAN obtained most of the important details of that meeting. Informed sources said that at the outset of the meeting Dr. Hammadi said the Iraqi Government continues to view relations with Jordan as strategic and does not want to disturb these relations in any way. He said Jordanian citizens in Baghdad receive special treatment and their rights and security are very important to Baghdad.

These sources said Dr. Hammadi reiterated that the recent killing of a number of Jordanian citizens in Iraq was a criminal act committed by thieves and criminals. Dr. Hammadi said these criminals, who were arrested by Iraqi security authorities, confessed their crimes and will face trial soon.

The sources said Hammadi repeated an invitation to the Jordanian Government to participate with Iraqi Security authorities in the investigations of these murders.

The sources disclosed that Dr. Sa'dun Hammadi explained to Jordanian Ambassador Qaqish that the Iraqi Government listens very seriously to the Jordanian Government's advice regarding Security Council Resolution 986, which stipulates exchanging oil for food. Iraq agreed to this resolution a few days ago. The sources added that the Iraqi official commended the Jordanian Government's concern for lifting the suffering of the Iraqi people resulting from the siege which was imposed on Iraq more than five years ago.

The sources cited the Jordanian ambassador in Baghdad, who emerged optimistic from that meeting, as describing Jordanian-Iraqi relations as strategic and historic. The ambassador also said that both the Jordanian and Iraqi Governments will endeavor to improve these relations in the near future.

The sources revealed that the Jordanian ambassador in Baghdad conveyed to the Iraqi official the firm Jordanian viewpoint vis-a-vis relations with Iraq and reiterated that Jordan only asks Iraq to comply with the international resolutions. The ambassador said that these resolutions and compliance with them are the basis for developing and expanding future bilateral relations primarily to serve the interests of Iraq.

The sources added that the Jordanian ambassador informed Hammadi of the Jordanian Government's strong desire for the Iraqi Government to agree to Security Council Resolution 986 to help lift the suffering of the Iraqi people gradually. This is something to which Baghdad was committed later, thereby reaffirming that relations have improved and that Baghdad has heeded Amman's advice.

The sources noted that the Jordanian ambassador explained to Dr. Hammadi that Jordan does not accept anything other than Iraq's unity and territorial integrity and that Jordan stands against any proposals to partition Iraq by any side. The ambassador was cited as saying to Dr. Hammadi during the meeting that Jordan has no intention to interfere in Iraq's internal affairs and that it will not become a base for any hostile act against Iraq. Also, the ambassador was cited as saying that Jordan will not be a party to any call or act aiming to change the existing regime in Iraq because this is considered an internal Iraqi affair that only concerns the Iraqi people, leadership, and government and that Jordan has nothing to do with such matters.

The sources said that the Jordanian ambassador told the Iraqi official, who commented on Jordanian-U.S. military maneuvers near the Iraqi border and U.S. planes overflying southern Iraq from Jordan, that these maneuvers were not new and that they have been conducted between the Jordanian and U.S. Forces since the early 80's. The ambassador added that these maneuvers are being conducted on Jordanian territory and under Jordanian sovereignty, noting that the objectives of these maneuvers are confined to developing the capabilities of the Jordanian Forces and the Royal Jordanian Air Force pilots. The ambassador noted that this is a legitimate Jordanian right, in addition to the fact that this is an internal Jordanian affair as long as it does not affect the internal affairs of any neighborly country.

Regarding the U.S. aircraft's flights from Jordan over southern Iraq, the Jordanian ambassador said, according to the sources, these flights are carried out by U.S. aircraft which are led by U.S. pilots without Jordanian participation, noting that these flights are part of Jordan's compliance with the international resolutions on monitoring the no-fly zone over southern Iraq. He pointed out that the proof is that Jordan does not allow these aircraft to fly over Iraq directly from Jordanian borders, but through Saudi territory. This shows that Jordan abides by the UN Security Council resolutions on Iraq.

The sources said that the talks between Dr. Hammadi and the Jordanian ambassador in Baghdad also dealt with the Iraqi opposition. The ambassador stressed that the Jordanian Government deals with the Iraqi

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opposition in accordance with firm conditions and bases, and that the presence of some opposition groups in Amman is in accordance with an agreed-upon legal framework. He added that the Jordanian Government hoped to open a dialogue between these groups and the Iraqi Government within the framework of political pluralism and democracy where there is room for all political trends and groups. He clarified that Jordan did not ask certain military commanders to leave Baghdad for Amman, that they came to Jordan entirely of their own accord, that they are guests in Amman, that none of them was granted political asylum, and that the decision to leave Jordan is left to them.

The sources added that Ambassador Qaqish reiterated the Jordanian Government's great concern about the recent killing of a number of Jordanian citizens in Iraq. He called for bringing the criminals to justice, stressing that Jordanian nationals in Iraq must be protected and that their possessions and rights must not be encroached on by anyone.

SHIHAN learned that the two officials submitted reports on the meeting to their governments for study. Information also reveals that the two officials agreed that this meeting be a prelude to other meetings in the future to promote relations and to stop the deterioration which affected them over the past few months. Within this context, SHIHAN learned that a senior Iraqi official might arrive in Amman within the next few weeks to discuss Jordanian-Iraqi relations and to settle some unresolved problems between the two countries.

The sources said there is an opportunity for such a visit, which was described as important for restoring momentum to Jordanian-Iraqi relations.

The sources also said that available information reveals that an Iraqi official is expected to arrive in Amman. The official, they said, is Tariq 'Aziz, Iraqi deputy prime minister. 'Aziz maintains good relations with various Jordanian political circles and played a major role in enhancing Jordanian-Iraqi relations.

So, all political signs over the past couple of months are that Jordanian-Iraqi relations will improve, especially after foreign sides and some Arab countries attempted to impair and then sever relations between the two countries to make political gains at the expense of both countries. The recent chill in Jordan's relations with some Arab countries indicated that Jordan had discovered a major conspiracy to jeopardize relations between Amman and Baghdad.

Therefore, Jordan calmed down its tone, and its officials sent positive messages to Baghdad saying that the strongly-worded previous statements were just a reaction to events dictated by political circumstances at that time. The major event that damaged relations at that time was Husayn Kamil Hasan's killing after his return to Baghdad.

Therefore, all signs are that relations are returning to normal. Although Jordanian-Iraqi relations appeared to be tense over the past few months, the Jordanian leadership did not stop defending the pan-Arab principles of its foreign policy.

While Iraq was in dire need of support to maintain its political unity and national sovereignty in the long run—a sovereignty which was threatened with a proposed mechanism to distribute foodstuffs and medicine—the Jordanian leadership used its regional influence over Arab and neighboring countries to stress certain constant principles, foremost of which is the Iraqi people's unity and Iraq's territorial integrity. This was clear in the joint declaration issued by the Husayn-Demirel summit in Turkey last week.

Jordan: Information Minister on U.S. Military Support, Other Issues

JN0206122496 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 2 Jun 96 pp 1, 28

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In a session held last night under Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti, the cabinet discussed 19 of the 48 articles contained in the Press Association draft law. The cabinet began its discussion of the draft law at last week's session.

Information Minister Dr. Marwan al-Mu'ashshir said that the cabinet will continue to discuss the remaining articles of this law on 4 June. [passage omitted]

Commenting on the newly elected Israeli prime minister's initiative to make his first contact with His Majesty King Husayn, Dr. al-Mu'ashshir said this is a sign that Israel attaches great importance to Jordan's role in the peace process. He noted that Jordan is a successful model that should be emulated to achieve peace in the region and to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict in a way that not only guarantees stability in the region, but also prosperity. He said that this model will be strengthened and reinforced by resuming the peace process on the rest of the tracks and by reaching a comprehensive solution on these tracks in the future.

Regarding statements by the chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff on military support for Jordan, the information minister said that talks between Jordan and the U.S. Administration on military aid are ongoing. He said: We always look for ways to support the Jordanian Armed Forces, but I do not want to go into more detail. [passage omitted]

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Commenting on the recent Israel attacks against southern Lebanon, al-Mu'ashshir said: Our position on all these issues, especially the attacks, is clear. Jordan wants Lebanon to extend sovereignty over its entire land. Jordan also wants the implementation of UN Resolution 425 and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon to enable Lebanon to extend sovereignty over its entire territory.

Jordan: State Security Court Investigates Forged U.S. Dollars

JN0206194096 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 2 Jun 96 pp 1, 19

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman—The State Security Court prosecutor general concluded his investigation of Nayif al-Tawrah, who was arrested after security organs seized forged U.S. dollars amounting to $100,000 from his car last Wednesday [29 May].

A judicial source said the investigation indicated that al-Tawrah had received the banknotes from an Iraqi national, pointing out that the security organs seized the money while al-Tawrah was sitting inside his car in al-'Abdali area.

The source added that al-Tawrah refused to reveal to the prosecutor general the identity of the person, who had given or sent the money to him. The source also said that the State Security Court prosecutor general would prepare the charge against the detainee and submit it to the military prosecutor general to endorse it so that a bill of indictment can be organized. Otherwise, he will order the abrogation of the charge.

The source also said the detainee would be charged with one of the following:

Possessing, but not circulating, apparently forged or altered banknotes, for which he could be sentenced to prison terms ranging from one month to three years in accordance with Article 240 of the Penal Code.

Possessing and circulating forged banknotes, for which he could be sentenced to 15 years imprisonment with hard labor if found guilty.

Bringing forged banknotes into the country, for which he could be sentenced to 15 years in prison.

The judicial source said that an application was submitted yesterday to release the detainee on bail, but that no decision was made on the issue.

Jordan: PLF's Abu-al-'Abbas Arrives in Amman for Medical Treatment

JN0406115896 Amman SAWT AL-MAR'AH in Arabic 5 Jun 96 p 2

[FBIS Translated Text] Abu-al-'Abbas [Muhammad 'Abbas, secretary general of the Palestine Liberation Front, PLF] arrived in Amman from Baghdad for medical treatment. Abu-al-'Abbas is not well, and it is said that he has a heart problem. The Palestinian Authority received tremendous pressure to hand over Abu-al-'Abbas to the FBI. He is charged with hijacking the Achille Lauro.

Abu-al-'Abbas is waiting for guarantees that he can return to the self-rule region. He said demands that he be extradited to the United States should stop. The Jordanian Government previously prevented Abu-al-'Abbas from entering Jordan, but it allowed him to enter this time because of his health.

Jordan: 'Responsible Sources' Cited on 'Sabotage Operations'

JN0406092896 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 4 Jun 96 pp 1, 20

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-DUSTUR learned from responsible sources that the government recently unearthed more than a sabotage operation targeted at state security. Syria was behind these operations, and the would-be perpetrators were arrested before the operations could be implemented.

The sources said that if these operations had been carried out, they would cause the kind of catastrophe to Jordan described by His Majesty King Husayn in recent statements.

The sources said it has become very clear that Jordan is targeted by parties who want to harm it and its regional and pan-Arab role, and pointed out the false accusations against Jordan in the past. The sources said that the parties engaged in sabotage and abuse against neighboring countries have been exposed.

The sources said none of the planned sabotage operations have been carried out in Jordan yet, and the government has learned about all of these attempts and arrested the would-be perpetrators.

The sources said the objective of these operations was to create confusion and instability in the kingdom, which would obstruct the Jordanian role in clearing the Arab atmosphere, improving Arab relations on all levels, and serving the nation's causes and the peace process.

The sources said there is no Egyptian mediation between Amman and Damascus by Cairo, adding that the issue

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is not one of clearing the atmosphere because there are principles and joint interests that should be respected in order to clear the atmosphere; and this is not a question of slogans because the slogans stage is over.

The official Jordanian sources emphasized that Arab solidarity is based on joint interests and not on words, and whoever wants to clear the atmosphere should not threaten the national security of Jordan, harm the country, and encroach on its security and stability.

Jordan: Newspaper Report Details 'Terrorist Actions'

JN0306111096 Amman SHIHAN in Arabic 1-7 Jun 96 p 6

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Since the government announced it had foiled 36 terrorist actions designed to destabilize the country, various parliamentary, union, political, and economic quarters have been asking questions about the authenticity of the claims made by the prime minister at a meeting 45 days ago with a number of deputies at the Parliament building.

A government-imposed blackout on the news has meant a dearth of specifics, but the statement itself has had an adverse impact on the tourism and investment sectors. We have learned that a slew of tourist groups from the United States and Europe were advised by their governments against coming to Jordan on the grounds that the country was neither safe nor stable. The statements by the prime minister and other top Jordanian officials have been reported by news agencies and television networks.

Since the restoration of democracy, Jordan has bolstered its domestic security and stability, hence the surprise with which the statement was greeted by observers. They note that none of the previous governments ever stated that the country's stability and security had been targeted by so many would-be terrorist attacks. The general impression has been that Jordan is now a time bomb, and the observers further note that these thwarted attacks were supposed to have been mounted within the relatively short span of three months.

With the government less than forthcoming on specifics and confining itself to the reference to the involvement of unnamed outside and local quarters, Jordanian political and economic circles could not but call the statements into question. Never mind that they were made by the prime minister himself. Certain political circles have charged that the prime minister and his government are making such statements as a self-serving exercise. To establish the truth, "SHIHAN" initiated its own effort and sought and obtained details from security and other informed sources, in addition to interviews conducted by an investigative team of the paper. We are sharing our findings with our readership, but withholding judgment.

Reporters from SHIHAN have, over the last two weeks, been holding contacts to verify the truth about the purported attempted terrorist operations. Union and parliamentary informed sources maintain that the number of the thwarted terrorist attacks is inflated. The government, they contend, had calculated that such a rumor would serve as a distraction for public opinion and parliamentary circles as well as showing the government as being targeted by enemies.

"The State Security Public Prosecution records have only four files on four groups that had planned subversive action to destabilize the country", according to informed security sources contacted by "SHIHAN." They cite an attempted attack by a group affiliated to Ahmad Jibril's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command. Members of the group were apprehended two weeks ago, and their foiled operation was not included in the official 36-operation "tally," nor was the one that was to have been carried out by a group apprehended in 'Ajlun last month. "SHIHAN" has learned that the State Security Public Prosecutor has completed investigations with the three suspects in the latter case, and is now preparing an indictment sheet.

According to the sources, the security agencies had caught the group after having been tipped that there were plans to mount terrorist attacks against sites visited by Israeli tourists. These suspects, the sources add, had been monitoring the arrival and departure of buses via the northern crossing [al-Shaykh Husayn Bridge], the Israeli Embassy and ambassador's residence, as well as a number of hotels in the capital where Israeli tourists usually stay. The group was caught in the possession of 24 anti-personnel and anti-armor mines they had found in a field close to their townships. They also had a number of automatic weapons, three explosive belts like the ones used by 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Battalions in their recent suicide bombings in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. "SHIHAN" learned that members of this cell made a detailed confession about their plan to the State Security Public Prosecutor, disclosing information about how they came by the explosives and how they planned to execute their attacks.

The State Security Court's Public Prosecution is expected to refer them to the State Security Court in mid-week to face charges of illegal possession of explosives for illegal uses.

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Meanwhile, according to other security sources speaking to SHIHAN, another extremist Islamic group crossed into Jordan from a neighboring Arab state with a plan to mount a terrorist attack in the Petra district several months ago. The plan called for blowing up a hotel that was hosting a regional conference on security and disarmament held within the framework of the multilateral peace talks. Attending the conference, in addition to the partners in the Middle East peace process, were a large number of countries and their top intelligence officers, including chiefs of intelligence services. The sources say four persons of a nationality of an Asian nation, who were about to carry out the attack, were apprehended.

Jordanian security agencies also aborted a planned attack by an Islamist group on the Israeli Embassy in Amman and an attempt on the life of the Israeli ambassador in Amman.

In a separate development, there has been talk of the security agencies smashing a terrorist cell in one of Jordan's governorates in the first half of May. The cell was said to number between four and seven persons who had been planning terrorist attacks against certain sensitive targets and tourist sites in Jordan. According to the same sources speaking to "SHIHAN," this case is now pending before security agencies.

Information relating to another issue — not new however — has also been made available to "SHIHAN". No conventional weapons or explosives are involved in this case, in which 40 kg of the radioactive mercury used in military industries were seized. The four suspects in this case are two Jordanians, and Egyptian, and an Iraqi. The prime suspect (Y.I), a Jordanian, purchased the mercury in Iraq and, unable to find a buyer upon his return to Jordan, he travelled to Germany.

During Y.I.'s stay in Germany, suspect (M.R), also a Jordanian, got in touch with him to inform him that he had found a buyer for the mercury. The two struck a deal that they sell the substance for 1.25 million Jordanian dinars in agreement with the third suspect (M.M.), an Iraqi, and the fourth (A.K), an Egyptian.

Acting on a tip, the security agencies arrested the four persons while in the possession of an iron cylinder containing the mercury. Also caught on them was a slip of paper with a hand-written formula and instructions on how to handle the substance.

Red mercury is known to be a highly hazardous substance used in terrorist attacks; it has proliferated around the world thanks to the Russian mafia in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Meanwhile, according to separate security sources, the 36 aborted acts of subversion did not, strictly speaking, rank as terrorist. Some of them involved hauls of narcotics seized by anti-drug squads. One such was a large amount of "hashish" worth millions [currency not identified] found on three Arabs who were arrested by anti-drug squads. Another case revealed by security agencies involved three Iraqis who were suspiciously present or seen wandering in the vicinity of the Prime Ministry; they were said to have been arrested on the suspicion that they were planning to assassinate 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti. One of the suspects had on him a camera he used to log the prime minister's movements.

In other terrorist-related cases, four persons were arrested on grounds of suspicious behavior. As of the time this paper went into print, none of them have admitted that they were planning to assassinate the prime minister or that they had any link whatsoever to any terrorist organization.

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Lebanon: British Minister Comments After Meeting al-Hirawi, Buwayz

NC0306121396 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1115 GMT 3 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Jeremy Hanley, British minister of state for foreign and Commonwealth affairs, has said that he is visiting Lebanon to continue the meeting held between the British and Lebanese foreign ministers and to emphasize that Britain supports Lebanon in the peace and reconstruction process. After a meeting with Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, Hanley said: We believe that Lebanon has a good future, and this can be achieved when a comprehensive peace is reached in the region.

Asked how Britain will help with the reconstruction of Lebanon, he replied: We are discussing this with our European partners, and we believe that Lebanon is in a good position to receive aid from the European Union. I sensed economic growth here, and this will increase as the peace process develops. Answering another question, he said: We will urge the new Israeli government to resume and follow up on what the previous government started. Asked about the message he delivered to Prime Minister al-Hariri, Hanley said: The message underlines friendship between the two countries and expresses support for the European and U.S. efforts to achieve peace. We will continue to urge Israel to implement Security Council Resolution 425.

Hanley then called on Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz and stressed after the meeting that his country supports the peace process and the reconstruction process in Lebanon. He expressed his view that the situation in the south is now better than before. He said it is necessary to support the April understanding and to implement Resolution 425, because this will advances the peace process.

Lebanon: Al-Hirawi Suggests Iran Trying To Infiltrate Country

NC3105130796 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1115 GMT 31 May 96

[Report on interview with Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi by Yazbik Wahbah from the Presidential Palace in Beirut; date not given—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Ilyas al-Hirawi today accused some countries of having personal interests and of trying to infiltrate Lebanon through the back door. He said: Enough opening shops here and there for others and for various states, be they neighboring countries or further afield. Neither visits with political implications nor visits from some countries that offer donations will rescue Lebanon and elevate it. The brains of Lebanon's people will do that. While al-Hirawi hinted at Iran, he pointed out that the resistance is indebted to no one. If we discuss resistance, we mean Lebanese resistance. Al-Hirawi's statements came when he received a delegation from the Northern Youth Grouping headed by Engineer Jamal al-Badawi. He said:

[Begin al-Hirawi recording] We want Lebanon to be united. We do not want to have back doors through which people with personal interests can sneak into Lebanon. Previously, Lebanon was divided. Every side would resort to a foreign state for support. You know this very well; I do not want to expand on this point. I said this recently during a Cabinet session. We do not want visits with political implications. We do not want visits from officials in some countries who come here to prove through donations that they will make Lebanon a success and that they will support it. Lebanon can only rise through the hard work, brains, and nationalism of its sons. Enough opening shops here and there for others and other countries, be they close or further afield. [applause] We deal with brothers and friends on an equal footing but we cannot open up supermarkets for them or a way into Lebanon. When I look at your faces, I realize that you understand what I want to say. When we say resistance we mean the Lebanese resistance. When we speak about liberation, we mean the liberation of Lebanon. This is not a favor from anyone to anyone. There is resistance in our policy. There is also resistance in the stance taken by the head of state. This was evident in the United Nations and in my meeting with President Clinton. [end recording]

Lebanon: Iranian Embassy Denies Involvement in Attack

NC3105175896 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1615 GMT 31 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Iranian Embassy in Lebanon has announced that it had nothing to do with the attempt to kidnap the Iranian citizen 'Ali 'Abd-al-Wahhab Muhammad 'Ali Zaghi in the southern suburb. The Iranian Embassy said in a statement that officials of the consular section of the embassy went to visit Zaghi after he was shot at. They reassured themselves about his health and his medical treatment. The statement explains that contacts continue with the relevant Lebanese parties to learn the details and background of the incident. REUTER cited a source at the Iranian Embassy who denied that Zaghi is an Iranian opposition figure.

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Lebanon: Fadlallah on Iranian Moves, Lebanon Situation

MM0306111296 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 31 May 96 p 6

[Interview with Shaykh Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah by Tariq Tarshishi and Tha'ir 'Abbas in Beirut; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] How do you interpret the recent Iranian comprehensive moves in Lebanon toward the Lebanese state and the various political forces?

[Fadlallah] We must not forget that Iran is an important state in the region regardless of the political complications associated with the Iranian role in the region whether at Arab, Islamic, or international levels. Naturally, like any other state, Iran, faced with the political siege imposed on it, always tries to seek more understanding in order to be able to reach a broader political spectrum. I do not believe that there is any state in the region or outside it which does not think the same way, particularly in the Lebanese arena which is the arena of arenas and the breathing lung for the region's problems.

Iran, which has managed to wield some influence in Lebanon through the Islamic movement and to gain some positions in the Palestinian picture, has been the target of many political campaigns aimed at distorting its image. The recent events in which Iran participated through coordination with Syria, particularly on the Lebanese question to the degree allowed by Iranian-Syrian relations and within the margin that Iran has in Lebanon, have given Iran the chance of openness with Lebanon in one way or another and the chance to talk to the various Lebanese political trends to clarify Iran's image and portray it as it wants to portray it, and also to answer many questions. And I think that has given the politicians a good opportunity to understand Iran better than before. Iran has also benefited from new friendships or new relations with Lebanese politicians. That is very normal in Lebanon. The U.S. ambassador in Beirut (Richard Jones) moves around and meets with all influential people to explain the U.S. policy or to enlist many people's support for the U.S. policy. You also see other ambassadors opening up to the Lebanese reality, whether Arabs — when the Arab states had advanced positions in Lebanon, which receded as a result of international complications — or foreigners. I believe that Lebanon is the only state where the ambassador of any foreign state has freedom of relations and contacts. That is why I see Iran's move as a normal matter reflecting Iran's desire to portray a clear image of itself on the Lebanese political scene and to strengthen its popular influence on the Lebanese. Lebanon does not object to that, because the new friendship between the Lebanese state and Iran is important to both.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Some people believe that the Iranian role in Iran harms the international approach to the Lebanese question.

[Fadlallah] I do not believe that the matter is as serious as some think, because the Lebanese question is open to more than one international concept with regard to preparing the new Lebanese role and, after the settlement, Lebanon's relations with the Zionist government and Syria, and what part they want Lebanon to play in the region. That is why everyone knows that Iran has an important role in Lebanon, through the Islamic movement and the resistance, a role which nobody can confiscate and which nobody feels the need to eliminate because the game in the region still takes these security and political factors into consideration in its calculations pertaining to what is to happen in the future. That is why I do not see a danger of the Iranian influence in Lebanon developing into the extraordinary danger that some people feel in excess of the resistance which Syria and Iran agree on sponsoring and supporting in one way or another. I do not believe that the Iranian move can create extrordinary political conditions outside that context.

The United States, which wants to isolate Iran at popular and international levels, is, naturally, not happy about that role but does not sense a danger, particularly in view of the American-French tug of war in Lebanon. The United States may be more concerned about the danger of the French role, bearing in mind official Lebanon's sympathy with it as a result of the friendship between the Lebanese Prime Minister (Rafiq al-Hariri) and French President (Jacques Chirac) or other subjective matters, than about the Iranian role.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] In the current circumstances do you expect some Israeli military action in Lebanon?

[Fadlallah] While not playing down any possibility of new Israeli operations necessitated by the internal situation there or by elements of a caesarian operation the region needs when it reaches a deadlock, we should view the matter on the basis of the natural factors in the arena away from what is behind the scenes. I see no chance, from the political aspect, for any new Israeli adventure in the near future in Lebanon. Some might try to raise such fears in order to set time conditions on the post-Israeli election phase in the region. Israel is still suffering the effects of the major shock of the double failure of the U.S.-Israeli plan in Lebanon, particularly after the massacres, which touched the very core of the world public opinion and shook the Arab and Islamic

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worlds in a manner not seen since the nationalization of the Suez Canal and the attack on Egypt. Israel and the United States are trying to defend Israel and improve its image and sweep away the broken glass after the sympathy it got in the wake of the martyrdom operations in Jerusalem and occupied Palestine. That is why Israel cannot possibly embark on a new adventure which could result in new massacres, particularly as Lebanon has the sympathy of world public opinion. Furthermore, there are no American or Israeli political factors that would allow that because Israel, having managed to breach the Arab wall by establishing diplomatic relations with Jordan, the Palestinians, and Egypt, and by establishing semi-political relations with some Gulf states, does not now want to lose that kind of friendship, albeit official friendship, especially after the Gulf states took an honorable stand regarding the aggression, particularly Saudi Arabia, which shook in protest against Israel's policy of trying to impose trusteeship over Lebanon and against the U.S. pro-Israel policy. We have even heard of a speech made at the holy mosque which dotted the i's and crossed the t's in an unprecedented manner, which means that any new Israeli adventure equal to or even less than that one could delete all Israeli presence in the Arab world.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] How do you view the future of the peace process in the region in the light of these conditions?

[Fadlallah] I imagine that the settlement process is still moving along the track drawn up for it, but the complexity of the Israeli elections, which influence the U.S. elections, might create a time barrier and a political barrier on that track. The current phase is therefore a phase of breath-catching awaiting what might come, because the Israeli circumstances do not allow calm, rational, and objective negotiations, which could have adverse effects on the elections here and there. I believe that the statements made reflect not the inner feelings but the superficial feelings. The settlement process, which has caused many psychological and political cracks in the Arab and Islamic popular reality, will make those in charge of it try to remedy that complexity in one way or another. [passage omitted]

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] How do you view the Turkish-Israeli agreement, and do you believe that there are attempts to besiege Syria and the Islamic movements?

[Fadlallah] We agree that all these moves are geared toward bringing down any opposition or rejectionist movement whether Islamic — which is the major element now — or non-Islamic. But we find that those people move from above, with various states, to bring about such agreements as the Turkish-Israeli agreement and to put such pressures as the Turkish pressures on Syria or the U.S. pressures on Iraq. But when we look at the facts we see that they have been unable to contain others. The Turkish elections, for instance, projected the Welfare Party as the strongest party in Turkey after years of emphasis on secularism. If you went to Turkey you would see that the seculars are a small minority, and if you went to Iraq you would find that the ruler, who is trying to attract the United States to his side, is out of the popular framework, and the same thing in Algeria.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] How legitimate do you believe "fundamentalist violence" is?

[Fadlallah] We do not take violence into consideration when we talk about Islam. Violence is not the basis in the process of change or in political or cultural confrontation, for the simple reason that violence might win you the arena, but it does not give you the possibility of expanding it. That is why we see that the Islamic call method seeks the gentle approach, as the Almighty said: "Preach your God's way with wisdom and good advice," and "argue with them nicely,..." and as the prophet said: "Kindness is weighing everything, and treating everything on its merit. God is kind and likes kindness." So the basis is the call for Islam and work for it as well as openness to others with good words and good methods.

As regards violence, it is a reaction to the violence of others because violence is in the nature of life...and because you must face many people who impose violence on you with violence.

Many world regimes that talk about rejecting violence were born with more severe violence and could not have established their presence without killing thousands. Therefore the issue of violence is determined by what others want, in terms of besieging you as a human being and not leaving you any way of breathing. It is natural in this case for you to defend yourself. In Islam violence moves in two lines, preventive and defensive. As in the words of the almighty God: "Fight them to prevent sedition." Violence in Islam is not aggressive. It is defensive. The word "jihad" in Islam is exactly like any other equal word in all defense ministries or in world wars. The Kuwait war demonstrated Arab violence and international violence but everyone cried out that violence was necessary because of the despotic violence which imposed itself on Kuwait and wanted to impose itself on the region after imposing itself on Iran.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] How do you view the UN acceptance of the "oil for food" principle for Iraq?

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[Fadlallah] The United Nations accepted that as a way out of its present dilemma in relation to the Iraqi question, and especially the Kurds. The question of securing a share for the Kurds was behind the recent complications. It was also a way out of the UN's humanitarian dilemma in Iraq, but the the Iraqi issue is postponed until after settlement of that.

Lebanon: Nasrallah—'Operations' Disprove Secret Clauses Claim

NC0206065096 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0430 GMT 2 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Hizballah Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah has said that the martyrdom and special operations carried out by the mujahidin in Palestine and Lebanon have caused an extreme state of confusion in Zionist society. He added that the operations carried out by the Islamic Resistance refute the claims on the existence of secret clauses in the April Understanding.

Lebanon: Hizballah's Qasim Says Israeli Raid Violates Understanding

NC3105165096 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1530 GMT 31 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Deputy Hizballah Secretary General Shaykh Na'im Qasim considers the raid on Ba'labakk a clear violation of the April Understanding, which prohibits attacks on populated areas. He affirmed that Hizballah will coordinate directly with the Lebanese Government in order to put an end to the repeated violations by the occupation forces. He pointed out that the recent resistance operation inside the occupied region is one of the integral rights and duties repeatedly declared by the party. He affirmed that the April Understanding is a document everyone recognizes. He said that Hizballah will continue its mission of ending the occupation of our territory, and nothing will stop us as long as our land is occupied.

Lebanon: Buwayz Cited on Netanyahu, Paris Talks

MM0306131696 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 31 May 96 p 3

[Report on interview with Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz by Randah Taqiyy-al-Din in Paris; date not given: "Buwayz Tells AL-HAYAH: 'Awn Needs Psychological Treatment; Elections Will Take Place if There Is No Internal Rift"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz, who is currently visiting Paris, yesterday met at the Lebanese Embassy with his French counterpart Herve de Charette, with the French Parliament's Foreign Relations Committee headed by Valery Giscard d'Estaing, and with the Arab ambassadors. In an interview with AL-HAYAH he said that the Lebanese legislative elections will take place if there is nothing to indicate that they might be used to cause an internal rift, and that Lebanon must try to dissociate the elections from the regional situation if a tense atmosphere prevails following Binyamin Netanyahu's election as Israel's prime minister.

He described General 'Awn as "a sick person who needs a mental hospital." He said that he did not discuss his case with the French officials "not only now, but also during the last five years. Even among 'Awn's French friends the atmosphere is far removed from reality."

He said that the disagreement between Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri and Hizballah is not over substance but over some practices.

Commenting on Netanyahu's election, he said: "So far the situation is still completely uncertain. The first question is how Netanyahu will secure a majority, what coalition he will form, and, in view of this coalition, what key political option he will adopt. There is a direct link between the nature and type of the political coalition that will form the majority and the final political option."

He added: "A coalition between Netanyahu and the right-wing parties is one thing, a coalition between Netanyahu and the Labor Party another. In any case, Netanyahu will have to bear in mind that half the population of his country does not share his views, and consequently he will have to deal with the others somehow."

He went on: "There is always a certain margin between the candidate and the voter, and this means that there are political plans that a candidate can make which may be inconsistent with or differ from the plan of someone who is in a position of responsibility and faces a certain turning point beyond which it would be difficult to go." He said that another consideration will play a part in determining Israeli policy and will depend on what Netanyahu and the United States agree on, and, as U.S. technological and military support is essential to Israel, on the extent to which the United States is able to exploit this situation to exert pressure on Israel. In the light of all this, the option will be chosen and Israeli policy worked out. We cannot now prejudge individuals and policies, because it will be at least a month before a majority is secured, a government formed, and the final option adopted.

On whether he discussed with the French foreign minister the reasons for the delay of the monitoring committee, Buwayz said that "the understanding achieved

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was not a fundamental understanding to end the political problem, which will only end with the [completion of the] peace process and the implementation of Resolution 425. This understanding was aimed at defining the scope of operations in the south so that they do not harm civilians, and if military operations are carried out, this should not come as a surprise, because, by virtue of its mission and capabilities, the committee can neither control nor end the operations. If yesterday's operation took place inside the occupied Lebanese areas, it does not go against the substance of the understanding.

He said that he examined with the French side "what happened in the Israeli elections and how to assess their outcome. It seems that the French have adopted a wait-and-see position."

On the signs of U.S. concern about the French role in the region, Buwayz said that he believes that the issue has been exaggerated because "there is no conflict, and even if it were true that the United States would prefer its options to be the only ones to be put forward and would rather be alone in dealing with the issue, there could be differences of opinion. However, the issue has been exaggerated."

On his meeting with the parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee headed by Giscard d'Estaing and whether it raised with him the issue of Gen. Michel 'Awn, he said that he addressed Lebanese-French relations and their progress throughout history to the present. He reaffirmed Lebanon's important cultural, economic, and political role in the Middle East, which represents an essential bridge for France in the Middle East region, and talked about the situation in Lebanon following the constitutional reforms and the situation in the south in the light of the recent Israeli operation and the Israeli elections.

He said: "The prevailing atmosphere in the committee indicated France's considerable interest in Lebanon and particularly in a sovereign and independent Lebanon, in addition to Lebanon's characteristics, which France has always viewed as economic, cultural, and democratic freedom."

He stressed that he definitely did not raise the issue of Gen. 'Awn with the committee, saying: "The truth is that this trivial affair requires its protagonist to enter a mental hospital. This man is ill and has been ill for sometime. I believe that he was ill right from the start, but he is now more than ever in need of a mental hospital. Anyone who believes that this issue would be raised by us and the French Government is mistaken. I do not recall having raised it for years with the French authorities and it was not raised today with the Foreign Affairs Committee or anywhere else. I believe that it has caused some controversy in some newspapers and circles."

He added: "Some controversy is needed whenever there is a certain political lull, there is the need to fill newspaper pages, so that I can say that I met with some leading French figures, who are close to or friendly with the man [sentence as published]. In France there is the belief that this issue is beyond any political logic or reality."

On whether the open disagreement between Hizballah and Prime Minister al-Hariri constitutes a disagreement between Hizballah and the Lebanese Government, he said that he does not think that there is a serious disagreement "but it is a disagreement over some practices. Everybody in Lebanon agrees that as long as the Lebanese state does not have the means and guarantee to liberate the south, there must be resistance to the occupation. There is no disagreement over the principle. Many Lebanese quarters may have different views on the ways and details of how to put this principle into practice. The quarrel between the prime minister and Hizballah is a quarrel that does not concern the substance."

On whether the Lebanese elections will take place as scheduled even if Netanyahu is elected and peace is delayed, he said: "After the Israeli elections there will be tension in the region and many questions on whether the peace process will continue, on what approach Israel will adopt, and about Netanyahu's policy. There is some closing of ranks and precautionary measures are being taken on the internal front." He also said that "they will start in all Arab states, even those which do not have a direct issue." He added: "The aim is for the Lebanese elections to take place as scheduled, and to try to dissociate the elections as much as possible from the regional situation. If indeed there is no possibility that this issue will be used to cause an internal rift, then the elections will take place."

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Syria: More on al-Asad Meeting With Lebanese President al-Hirawi

JN0206163196 Damascus SANA in Arabic 1610 GMT 2 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 2 Jun (SANA)—President Hafiz al-Asad received Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi at the Presidential Palace in Latakia at 1130 [0830 GMT] today.

The reception was attended by Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam and was followed by a closed-door meeting between the two presidents. Khaddam and Prime Minister Mahmud al-Zu'bi later joined the meeting.

Talks dealt with a host of Arab, international, and bilateral issues that concern the two sides. The situation in the region and in the Arab arena was reviewed in light of the developments, activities, current contacts, and future prospects.

The two sides emphasized the importance of cooperation and coordination between the two countries.

Syria: Peace Contingent on Israel's 'Total Withdrawal'

JN0306162396 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 3 Jun 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dear listeners: Syria has never been interested in Israeli elections, because it believes that elections in any country are a purely domestic affair and that the Israelis have the right, like others, to elect the group they want to assume power. Syria is only interested in advancing the peace process and in this or that party's readiness to cope with peace without placing obstacles or exploding mines in the way.

By judging the future in light of past events, we can say the peace process that started in Madrid will not be able to move forward with firm, balanced steps to attain its desired goal of true, fair peace. It is clear that five years of world efforts failed to make any major progress toward the goal of peace. The Likud Party and the Labor Party created similar obstacles to hamper the peace process and also did their best to prevent progress and distort the image of true, just, and comprehensive peace.

However, we will not expect anything or give up hope that some developments may save the peace process from its crisis, breathe a new life into it, and push it forward efficiently and seriously toward achieving its ultimate objective in accordance with Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, and 425 and the U.S. initiative that is based on the land-for-peace formula. We also hope that something will thaw the chill engulfing the peace process.

In his message to President Hafiz al-Asad, President Bill Clinton stressed U.S. determination to go ahead with its commitment to achieving just, comprehensive, and lasting peace in the region. It is natural that peace cannot result from the desire of one party in the conflict. In order for peace to be firm and coherent, both parties in the conflict should work together to achieve peace. Syria made it clear that peace is a strategic option, and President Hafiz al-Asad left no room for conclusions about Syria's concept of peace.

We know that the U.S. president still remembers President al-Asad telling him in Damascus that Syria was ready to meet the objective requirements of peace in exchange for Israel's total withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 line and from southern Lebanon. We do not believe that the U.S. president has changed his mind since declaring in Damascus that the way to peace in the region should be based on the Security Council's resolutions and the exchange of land for peace, that his administration is committed to the resolutions of the international legitimacy, and that he is confident Syria believed in peace as the noblest human value.

Will President Clinton use his own means and logic to persuade the new Israeli prime minister of these ideas and that Israel's security cannot be safeguarded as long as Arab lands remain occupied and Arab rights are usurped.

Syria: AL-BA'TH Hails Syrian, Lebanese Quest for Peace

JN0306080596 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0445 GMT 3 Jun 96

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In a commentary entitled "The Constants of the Joint Syrian-Lebanese Stand," the newspaper AL-BA'TH addresses the special Syrian-Lebanese relations, saying: Syria and Lebanon have managed to create an Arab nucleus that is capable of realizing the goals, aspirations, and ambitions of the same and one people in the two fraternal countries, which are legitimate and just; namely, the building of a modern, contemporary, and developed country and the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace grounded in the relevant UN resolutions and the Madrid formula, which provides for complete Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories and complete restoration of usurped rights by all sides.

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AL-BA'TH adds: Only such peace would eliminate all flash points and hotbeds of tension, anarchy, and aggression in the region. Only such peace would provide the peoples of the region security, stability, and the desired economic prosperity. Only such peace would help the region meet the current serious challenges.

AL-BA'TH goes on to say: That is why Syria and Lebanon have viewed the achievement of peace as their strategic option. They have continued to make every honest and constructive effort to achieve such peace. It is true that Israel might try to obstruct the peace process, slow it down, and even kill it by its uncompromising and intransigent positions and by its efforts to conclude separate, flawed, and partial peace deals with some Arab sides to the Arabs' detriment. Nonetheless, the peace process has become irreversible on both the regional and international scenes. Israel can neither overlook nor circumvent this fact.

AL-BA'TH concludes by saying: The summit meeting between Presidents Hafiz al-Asad and Ilyas al-Hirawi yesterday confirmed anew the constants of the joint Syrian-Lebanese stand, which is anchored in their efforts to vindicate the nation's interests and rights and achieve just and comprehensive peace without abandoning a single inch of territory or any single right.

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Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Rabbani Discusses Efforts for Peace

LD0306213996 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Dari 1630 GMT 3 Jun 96

[News conference given by Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani for domestic and foreign journalists in Kabul on 3 June — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Rabbani] In the name of God the compassionate, the merciful.

Dear journalists: I welcome you all here. It is my pleasure that I am able to have a brief meeting with you on the current situation in Afghanistan. As you know, the Islamic state considers a political solution to be the best way of reaching national understanding and restoring reliable and lasting peace and security in the country. We believe that hostilities [words indistinct] are in the interests of neither people nor country. The requirement at this juncture is for all Afghans — all involved forces and parties — to cordially sit down together to put an end to misunderstandings through talks and the exchange of views; to restore peace and security across the country; and to speed up the reconstruction process of our ruined country.

Dear journalists, in pursuit of this sincere policy, the Islamic State of Afghanistan has repeatedly asked all concerned parties and forces to come together without preconditions to restore peace and start united talks on the most important national issues, such as the political system and state organizations, and to make a decision concerning them. [passage omitted]

Government delegations held intensive talks early this year in Jalalabad with party leaders, the Nangarhar Council, religious scholars, commanders, and tribal dignitaries. Delegations were also sent to Bamian and Mazar-e Sharif. Talks with General 'Abdol Rashid Dostam were well under way. The purpose of the talks was to reassure the people in the north about the peace efforts of the Islamic state. Had not some circles exerted influence, the talks might well have produced the desired results.

We are still interested in sincere talks because we consider talks and negotiation the best way of reaching an understanding and eliminating strife in the country. Several rounds of negotiations have been held with 'Abdol Karim Khalili's Hezb-e Wahdat. The talks are continuing. I think that both sides are optimistic concerning the result of the talks. Our talks with Hekmatyar ended in signing an agreement after several meetings. We and Hezb-e Eslami believe that the agreement will create a pivot of peace which will lead to [words indistinct] of all parties and forces. The agreement with Hezb-e Eslami is not aimed against any party. The agreement is not a military alliance. Its aim is to resolve problems peacefully.

Continuing the joint efforts of the state and the Hezb-e Eslami, a delegation will be sent to the north of the country. It is hoped that, building on the previous talks, this round of discussions will produce a desired result. We hope that by taking advantage of this good opportunity and our offer made in good faith, we will persuade General Dostam to join the intra-Afghan peace process. Similarly, on the basis of a previous decision of the State Council a delegation will be sent to Kandahar to start talks with the Taleban.

We believe that the Taleban's invitation to some jehadi leaders for talks is a step forward. We hope that the Taleban will choose talks and understanding instead of fighting, which only causes human losses and national destruction, and thus enable all parties and forces to resolve the important national problems through talks. We will continue our efforts to secure the support of all Afghan forces for an intra-Afghan dialogue aimed at achieving a general national understanding. We again ask all parties and forces to join this process. We believe that we can resolve all problems through talks and that decisions can thus be reached.

Dear journalists: We believe that Afghanistan belongs to all its people. The representatives of the people of the whole country should take part in the administration of state affairs. Our policy is a policy of understanding. We are against the monopoly of power in all forms. We have asked all parties to sit together and to collectively decide on matters of conflict. War is not a solution to differences. Those who consider war as a means of resolving problems either do not know or value less the wishes of the people and the needs of society. The people and society are tired of fighting and warmongers.

Therefore, our message to all parties and forces is the message of peace and an invitation to peace. The Islamic State of Afghanistan wants relations with all countries, including neighboring countries, that are based on respect for national independence, national sovereignty, territorial integrity, and on noninterference in each others' internal affairs. Now I am at your disposal for you to put your questions to me.

[Correspondent in Farsi] IRNA — Following the agreement reached with Hezb-e Eslami, when will the members of the interim government be announced and when will Hezb-e Eslami officials assume office?

[Rabbani] An agreement has been reached with Hezb-e Eslami and matters have been finalized. Now both sides are working on inviting other parties and groups

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with regard to their participation, and on explaining matters to the involved sides. After the completion of this process, other outstanding matters will also be implemented.

[Correspondent in Dari] ASSOCIATED PRESS — What will you do if the Taleban, who are firing rockets into Kabul, refuse to consider your proposals?

[Rabbani] We have continually asked the Taleban to respond positively to the peace message of the Islamic state. This is a message that comes from the heart of our nation. All our people want cessation of fighting. The state will again and again ask the Taleban to join talks and to stop fighting even if they do not want to. At the moment, we have nothing to say to the Taleban other than peace, stopping fighting, and solving the problem through talks. I had hoped that they would have realized that they cannot achieve anything through fighting.

[Unidentified correspondent] Recently the United Nations appointed a new envoy to Afghanistan. What is your message to him?

[Rabbani] We have been asking the United Nations to move faster and more seriously. Now that a new envoy has replaced Mr. Mestiri, we once again ask the United Nations to expeditiously discharge its responsibility in connection with peace.

[Unidentified correspondent] You said that an agreement has been finalized with Hezb-e Eslami, but Hezb was firing rockets into Kabul from its base in Chahar Asiab. What do you think the people of Kabul will be thinking about this?

[Rabbani] We think the people of Kabul want peace. They cordially welcome the voice of peace no matter where it comes from. I hope that, following the agreement between the state and Hezb-e Eslami, we will be able to take effective steps toward stopping the fighting. The people of Kabul will surely welcome the cessation of fighting and the restoration of peace in the country.

[Unidentified correspondent] Under the recent agreement between the state and Hezb-e Eslami, important government portfolios have been given to the state and to Hezb-e Eslami including the premiership, interior, defense, and finance portfolios. If this is the case, does it not contradict the remarks you made a while ago? That is to say, is it not a monopoly of power? Those portfolios have been given to Hezb-e Eslami. What will you be offering the other parties?

[Rabbani] I once again insist that the purpose of starting talks between Hezb-e Eslami and the state was to ensure peace and security, to halt the fighting and to create a pivot for peace. The talks started with the aim of enabling Hezb-e Eslami to invite the Coordination Council. The talks began with the Hezb-e Eslami as a representative of the Coordination Council. Our goal was not and will not be government positions. Those wishing to participate in the process of talks and understanding can present their demands to the state, to Hezb-e Eslami or to both sides jointly. No sensible proposal will be given a negative reply. Once again we ask various groups to put forward their demands as regards their participation in government and to start talks in this connection. I am sure that there will be no problem and no unreasonable obstacles will be created by anyone.

[Correspondent] KABUL TIMES—Can you give more information about sending delegations to Kandahar and Mazar-e Sharif because General Dostam refused to hold talks with the state?

[Rabbani] The Islamic state declares that despite the fact that previous delegations received no positive answer, and despite the fact that the involved sides rejected the government request for the restoration of security and the cessation of war, we are sending a delegation to the north. Our delegations are ready to leave. We will also send a delegation to the Taleban. We think that the involved sides should not lose their freedom to make decisions under pressure from meddlers. They should make independent decisions and should not submit to pressure from foreigners and those who interfere in our internal affairs. [passage omitted]

Afghanistan: Hezb-e Eslami Troops Continue To Fight Taleban Near Kabul

BK0206131896 Hong Kong AFP in English 1255 GMT 2 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KABUL, June 2 (AFP) - More than 3,000 Hezb-e-Eslami troops are in action against Taleban on the Kabul front in support of the forces of Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani, a military commander from the faction said Sunday. [2 June]

"Already around 1,000 Hezb mojahedin have been sent to the Kabul southeastern front in addition to 2,400 who have been deployed at two military bases in east and west of the city", Haji Akhtar Mohammad Salam said.

An additional 10,000 Hezb soldiers would arrive in Kabul "soon" to take part in "upcoming operations" against the Taleban militia, Salam told reporters at his Pule Charkhi base, 10 kilometers (six miles) east of here.

This was the first confirmation of the faction's involvement in combat on the side of the Kabul government after Rabbani and Hezb chief Golboddin Hekmatyar

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signed an accord 10 days ago in a turnaround from years of mutual hostility.

Officials here have said Hekmatyar would become prime minister under the power-sharing agreement, but no date has been announced yet for his arrival in the capital to take up the slot.

Salam said the joint forces would try to capture two important heights in the northeast and southwest of Kabul in order to march into Mohammad Aga district, in the neighbouring Logar province.

A thrust into Logar was necessary to cut Taleban's supply route to Chahar Asiab, 25 kilometers (16 miles) south of Kabul, he said.

Chahar Asiab was Hekmatyar's base before it was taken over by the Taleban Islamic militia, which emerged from Koranic schools in November 1994 and went on to seize control of most of Afghanistan.

The student-led militia has been besieging Kabul for more than eight months in a bid to topple Rabbani. They have vowed to enforce Islamic law throughout Afghanistan.

Salam ruled out a military threat to the government from the north by Uzbek militia of 'Abdol Rashid Dostam, saying the northern warlord "is not in a position to launch any military move" after the Rabbani-Hekmatyar pact.

"Dostam cannot attack the state from the north because of the strong presence of Hezb-e Eslami in Baghlan, Konduz and other northern provinces", he said.

Hekmatyar teamed up with the Kabul government after years of partnership with Dostam in a four-party alliance against Rabbani, known as Supreme Coordination Council.

Following his switchover, the Taleban reportedly invited a council member, former president Sebghatollah Mojaddedi, and some non-aligned Afghan factional leaders to their base at Kandahar for talks.

"Such a meeting, if convened, will be a political defeat and a policy reversal on the part of Taleban, who called all mojahedin and their leaders criminals", Salam said.

In the past, Taleban have often blamed mojahedin factions for the civil war in the country after the 1992 fall of communist rule in Kabul, vowing to disarm them.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh: Army Chief Promoted to Rank of Lieutenant General

BK0306131996 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1200 GMT 3 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Army Chief Major General Mahbubur Rahman has been promoted to the rank of lieutenant general. This order goes into effect today. President Abdur Rahman Biswas, who is also the supreme commander of the Armed Forces, and Naval Chief Rear Admiral Mohammad Nurul Islam decorated the army chief with the lieutenant general badge at a simple function held at the President House today morning. Air Vice Marshal Jamaluddin Ahmed, chief of air staff, was also present. Later, Lieutenant General Mahbubur Rahman paid a courtesy call on the president.

Bangladesh: Court Allows Convicted Former President To Contest Election

BK0206141396 Dhaka THE DAILY STAR in English 20 May 96 p 1 and 12

[By Supreme Court Correspondent]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The candidature of former president H.M. Ershad stands valid as the High Court [HC] Division yesterday rejected the writ petition filed challenging the acceptance of his nomination paper on the grounds that he is a convict.

A division bench of the HC comprising Justice A.M. Mahmudur Rahman and Justice Md. Fazlul Huq rejected the writ petition filed by A.K.M. Mayeedul Islam, former minister of Ershad's cabinet, now his rival candidate nominated by BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] in the Kurigram-3 constituency.

By the judgment the court upheld the earlier decision of the then Dhaka High Court, reported in 19 DLR [expansion unknown], and the decision of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, reported in 41 DLR purporting appeal as continuance of trial and a statutory right.

The court observed that Ershad is competent to contest the ensuing parliamentary election as his appeals against the judgments and orders of conviction and sentence are pending and his trial is yet to be concluded.

Khondker Mahbubuddin Ahmed, counsel for the petitioner, submitted that though Ershad's appeals are pending but the orders of conviction have not been stayed and as such he is disqualified to be elected a member of the Parliament.

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With the leave of the Court, Barrister Rafiqul Huq submitted that if any rule was issued he would submit vokalatnama [power of attorney] on behalf of Ershad. But as an officer being an advocate of the court he sought permission to the court for making submissions which was allowed.

He referred the decision of the then Dhaka High Court, reported in 19 DLR and the decision of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, reported in 41 DLR which decided that a person is not a convict unless he prefers an appeal against the order of conviction within the period of limitation and by the appeal the order of conviction is finally affirmed.

Bangladesh: Jatiya Party Releases Election Manifesto

BK0206080296 Dhaka THE DAILY STAR in English 10 May 96 pp 1, 12

[Report by a "Staff Correspondent"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Jatiya Party [JP], if elected, would amend the Constitution in the next parliament to cancel the February 15 polls and to repeal the 13th amendment.

The pledge was made in the party's 32-page election manifesto announced yesterday at a press conference at its Banani office.

The JP would also set up an inquiry committee to probe alleged irregularities during the rule of the immediate past BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] government. The JP manifesto said, "The farcical February 15 polls were rejected by the people. Therefore the 6th Parliament was illegal and the 13th amendment to the constitution is also illegal."

The JP would thus cancel the February 15 polls, repeal the 13th amendment and go for fresh arrangements for holding of polls under caretaker government. The 13th amendment to the Constitution, allowing for holding general elections under a caretaker government was passed by the sixth Parliament. The sixth Parliament was elected in the February 15 polls, which was boycotted by all major political parties.

The JP also pledged to establish good governance and an independent national economic base to achieve self-reliance by the year 2000.

Addressed by acting chairman of the party Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, the press conference was also attended, among others, by Presidium members Begum Roushan Ershad, Moudud Ahmed, Kazi Zafar Ahmed, Shah Moazzam Hossain and Secretary General Anwar Hossain Manju.

"Ershad is being denied of his constitutional right to put forward the JP election manifesto before his constituents," said Mizan Chowdhury adding that he was presiding over the programme as the acting chairman of the party, because of the party chief's absence.

During the press conference, a letter addressed to the Chief Advisor seeking the release of Ershad was also circulated. The letter was signed by the acting chairman, Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury.

In its polls manifesto, the JP spelled out that it was participating in the forthcoming general elections, to secure the release of its jailed leader H.M. Ershad and to ensure the basic rights of the people.

The JP manifesto pledged to seek national consensus on all economic and political issues. With the opposition parties, the JP policy would be that of "compromise and consensus and not confrontation."

It also promised to bring about transparency, neutrality and accountability of the government for economic development and improving the efficiency and sensitivity of the administration to bring about a qualitative change.

The manifesto said that effective measures will be taken for implementation of Islamic ideology and its principles. An Islamic Council will be formed as an advisory body to the government while communal harmony and freedom of all religions will be ensured, it said.

A strong defence for the country and a modernised armed forces with latest and sophisticated equipment will get priority, it said.

On foreign policy, the manifesto pledged to pursue "friendship with all, enmity with none" with emphasis on strengthening relationship with the OIC [Organization of the Islamic Conference] and SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] countries. JP will also seek the rightful share of water of all the international rivers including the Ganges and Brahmaputra and will establish sovereignty over South Talpatti, it said.

The JP manifesto said that an inquiry committee will be formed to probe into irregularities, corruption, nepotism, plundering of the economy by the BNP regime and punishment for those found guilty.

It also pledged to make the Jatiya Sangsad [Parliament] an effective institution and to accommodate the opposition political parties in the decision-making process.

The defunct Upazilla [subdistrict] system would be restored and the local government system would be further strengthened, it said.

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The manifesto also pledged separation of the judiciary from the executive, cancellation of repressive black laws, announcement of a minimum wage board for the labourers, formation of a new pay commission to reduce the disparities of the officers and employees and banning of the use of child labour.

It also promised to eradicate terrorism and anarchy from the educational institutions, introduce a mass-oriented education policy and ensure "education for all" by the year 2000.

Construction of bridges in all major rivers, introduction of electronic train service, development of airports, improvement of the inland water transport service and establishment of road communication with the Union Parishads [Councils] would be undertaken if JP is elected, it said.

The JP will encourage private initiative in the health sector, keep the life-saving drugs and essential medical equipment out of government taxation and establish high-quality hospitals to ensure health for all.

The party would initiate special measures for women's rights, eradication of joblessness and ensure a better future for the destitute children by reintroducing the Pathakali [destitute children] Trust.

The JP manifesto also assured autonomy for Radio and Television, allowing setting up of TV channel in the private sector, independence of the news media, increase in the production of newsprint and formation of wage board for journalists.

It pledged to take up measures for urban development and steps for solving the housing problems in the big cities and take effective measures for improving the traffic system of Dhaka city.

A separate ministry to ensure the rights of the freedom fighters and preserve their memories and uphold the spirit of the liberation war would be set up, it added.

India

India: Regional Parties To Join Government, Form 'Federal Front'

BK3105161296 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 31 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Regional parties, including Tamil Maanila Congress [TMC], DMK [Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam], Telugu Desam Party [TDP] and Asom Gana Parishad [AGP] have decided to participate in the United Front government. The Asom Gana Parishad will join in the ministry only later at its decision to join the government will have to be endorsed by the executive of the party which will require a few days.

Meanwhile a Federal Front consisting of Asom Gana Parishad, DMK, TMC and TDP has been constituted. Announcing this the TDP Chief Mr. Chandrababu Naidu said it was decided to have a front at a meeting of these parties this morning. He said the front consisting of the regional parties will present their own problems and place them before the United Front.

The common minimum program of the United Front will be released on Tuesday [4 June]. The front spokesman, Mr. Jaipal Reddy, said the draft of the common program is ready and it only needs to be vetted by senior leaders of the front and fine-tuned. Former Prime Minister Mr. V.P. Singh, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi, TMC Leader G.K. Moopanar, and Assam Chief Minister P.K. Mahanta were present.

The Left parties, including the CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist], CPI [Communist Party of India], the RSP [Revolutionary Socialist Party] and Forward Bloc have already made their stand clear that they would be supporting the front government from outside.

Our correspondent Shama Prasad has more details:

[Begin recording] The final touches are being placed for the common minimum program and the composition of the United Front ministry to be sworn in tomorrow. Leaders of the front have been meeting one another throughout the day and came together by the evening to tie-up some of the loose ends, if there might be any, for tomorrow's swearing-in ceremony. The common minimum program will, however, be formally announced only on Tuesday after it is vetted by the senior leaders of the front and is (?signed off). Even as the United Front government will be sworn in tomorrow, a new front named as Federal Front has been formed today. It consists of AGP, DMK, TMC and TDP. It held its first meeting this morning and leaders of the new front could convince one of its partners — AGP — to take part in the United Front government. [end recording]

India: Protectionist Policies of Political Parties Viewed

BK3105143696 Delhi BUSINESS STANDARD in English 31 May 96 p 7

[Article by Subir Roy: "Why Fear the Foreign Devil?"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Democracy assumes that the collective wisdom of the people is seldom wrong. One of those rare occasions when this is not so is the near-total consensus among political parties in India that

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there should be some restrictions on foreign investment in the consumer goods sector but that it doesn't matter if there is unlimited foreign investment in what is called the core sector, so much the better if it is accompanied by "high technology".

There are two fallacies here. One, that consumer goods are a non-core i.e. a nonessential area and two, there is not much of high tech in consumer goods manufacturing and that even if there is, we can do without it. These two devils have queered the pitch for any rational discussion.

The impoverished Indian masses need cheap, mass produced consumer goods. Providing these should be the first priority of any party. So foreign investment should be allowed foremost in these areas, including agriculture and dairying.

This has not been done for two reasons. The wrong reason is to believe that allowing foreigners to own Indian farms militates against our idea of food security. So till such time as Indians learn to modernise their own farming, it is quite all right to allow millions to remain malnourished and at the edge of starvation. The right reason is that growing more food without raising incomes doesn't help the poor and allowing land for corporate farming encourages land alienation. That raised neither incomes nor social well-being.

So foreign capital was not allowed into food production. The other end of the spectrum, the so-called core or infrastructure areas, was even more zealously guarded. Private capital, foreign and domestic, was not allowed into steel, coal, oil and gas for fear of losing our sovereignty. But today private investment, both domestic and foreign, is welcome in most of these areas. The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] is not against Enron's investment in the power sector but would scarcely have allowed Coca-Cola if it had a chance.

If you take away the top and a part of the bottom (today foreign investment is welcome in most areas of food processing), then we are left with the so-called consumer goods manufacturing sector in which entry of foreign capital has to be supervised to safeguard our sovereignty. The areas are not clearly defined but should include all kinds of automotives, consumer electronics and synthetic fibres.

The illogic of picking on this area is apparent but survives for two reasons. One is that most Communists and hard core BJP supporters, with RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh] origins, are honest patriotic and abstemious. For them cars, TVs, and shiny clothes are all symbols of the decadence that has come from abroad to corrupt Bharat. [India] It is possible to sympathise with this sentiment up to a point. There is much to be said for a society which abhors wide income disparities, particularly in the presence of abject poverty. But that problem has to be tackled differently, not through putting breaks on the inflow of foreign capital into the consumer goods sector.

The second reason becomes clear once we ask who benefits from such restrictions. They are the large, traditional India business houses which have historically been kept out of the core sector and so have no stake in it. When liberalisation came, the sector to be opened up most to foreign competition through imports was capital goods where Indian owners were not so big.

Earlier, leading Indian business houses fooled the Indian people by using and twisting popular leftist positions to their advantage. Licensing and restrictions on monopolies were used by them to keep out competition by preventing others from growing. They succeeded because populist politicians went along with them to serve their own ends. Today, the business houses are at the old game, cosying up to the BJP to ensure a policy regime which gives them a captive market for their shoddy produce.

To change all this, it is necessary to be rid of misconceptions. Steel-making technology is today available off the shelf but the know-how for Trinitron picture tubes or the formula for the Coca-Cola concentrate is not. It hardly matters if foreigners own and control the supply of nonessentials like soft drinks, colour TVs, and, of course, scooters.

It is far more rational to worry if large chunks of the Indian capital goods sector is owned by foreigners. Theoretically, they could shut down their Indian plants and force Indians to buy foreign machinery. Theoretically again, during a war with Pakistan, a US-owned steel mill could be forbidden by the US Congress to supply armour plates to the defence ministry. This is unlikely today but such fears are at least more rational than the fear of Kentucky Fried Chicken.

Even within the core sector paradigms have changed so much. A classical contrast is struck by BHEL [Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited] and C-DoT. BHEL helped the Indian power sector to grow rapidly but its monopolistic position enabled it to overcharge its customers, the SEBs, [State Electricity Boards] who didn't have money to go shopping elsewhere. Today, because of foreign competition, BHEL has changed its entire pricing policy and is again coming back into the market as a globally competitive supplier of power equipment.

The C-DoT story is even more fascinating. It reinvented the wheel by designing its own central switch for

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telephone exchanges. Once it was able to demonstrate its capabilities and India was ready to open up in the purchase of telecom equipment, the Indian government was able to drive brilliant bargains. This was thanks to the bench marking that C-DoT had done and the learning process that it had enabled a generation of Indian engineers to undergo.

The second misconception to be rid of is that modern consumer goods are luxuries on which 'scarce' foreign exchange should not be squandered. The Soviet leaders really dug their grave when, after providing their people with health, education and the basic necessities, they failed to meet their craving for modern consumer goods. Cheap, mass-produced consumer goods are vital for the well-being of the Indian masses and free entry of foreign capital and technology should be allowed to make this possible.

The third misconception to be rid of is the notion that you can keep putting restrictions on the import of goods and capital and still survive in today's global trade regime. Under the WTO, [World Trade Organization] restrictions on the import of consumer goods have to go very soon. The ultimate folly will be to discover then that a domestic manufacturing base, which could have taken care of much of the demand for those products, was not allowed to come up because of lobbying.

Today, nobody will try to import a small car into India even on zero import duty as the Maruti 800 is the cheapest car of its kind in the world. A liberal foreign investment regime for this sector will ensure that 10 years hence India will be the cheapest sourcing point for an entire range of small and medium-sized cars which will then find a ready market abroad, in the rest of South Asia, Africa and, maybe, the former socialist countries.

Which brings us to the fourth misconception, that you can export without importing. In a rapidly integrating world economic system, both imports and exports are likely to grow rapidly. The way to stay ahead is to keep depreciating the currency and also improve domestic efficiencies. That, and the large Indian market at hand, will make it worth while for foreign companies to source more and more from India for global supply.

India: Janata Dal Spokesman Confident of Government Stability

BK0306062496 Hong Kong AFP in English 0608 GMT 3 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] New Delhi, June 3 (AFP) — India's new coalition government, buoyed by the surprise entry of a communist party, dismissed predictions on Monday [3 June] that it was bound to collapse and said it would last a full five-year term.

Jaipal Reddy, a spokesman for the centrist Janata Dal (People's Party), the main party in the United Front coalition, said the new government was "as solid and united as a rock.

"We don't have to make any more efforts to get the backing of other parties," he told AFP on Monday, a day after the Communist Party of India (CPI) announced it was joining the administration. [passage omitted]

Reddy said the United Front, which has been promised the support of the Congress (I) party of former premier P.V. Narasimha Rao, would last a full five years and was in agreement on foreign policy, defence and economic issues.

"As far as external policy and defence are concerned, there is an extraordinary national consensus," he said. "About the (economic) reforms too there is no major problem." [passage omitted]

Reddy denied newspaper reports that the Congress and the United Front had struck a deal allegedly involving support for a Rao bid for the presidency and the induction of Congress heavyweights into the cabinet next year.

"There is absolutely no truth in this," he said. "There is no deal with the Congress and neither of us are looking into the distant future." [passage omitted]

India: Political Parties, Business Groups React to New Government

BK0106162096 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 1 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Various political parties and personalities have by and large welcomed the installation of the United Front government.

The Congress Party has said that the new prime minister has done a good balancing act while constituting his cabinet.

The CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist] has said that the new ministry opens a new chapter in the country's political history. The party has said there is now a greater recognition of the necessity of a coalition government based on genuine federalism.

The All India Minorities Front has said it hopes the minorities, backward classes, and dalits [low caste people] will be given adequate opportunities to progress and get their due share in the development of the nation.

The Bharatiya Janata Party leader and former prime minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, has termed the new ministry as a government of a truncated United Front with a separate Federal Front within it.

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Leading chambers of trade and industry have welcomed the new United Front government and have hoped that economic reforms will be continued.

The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, FICCI, has welcomed the new council of ministers under the leadership of Mr. Deve Gowda. The FICCI president, Mr. Deepak (Banker), has said the rich experience and statesmanship of the prime minister will provide a stable leadership and direction to the nation and its economy at this critical juncture. FICCI has also said it is confident that the economic reforms will be pursued vigorously.

The Associated Chamber of Commerce and Industry has said the new government formulate time-bound action plans to resolve various problems faced by industry. These include high interest rates and a credit crunch.

The president of the Confederation of Indian Industry, Mr. Shekhar Dutta, has said Indian industry is confident that economic liberalization will continue and deepen under Mr. Deve Gowda.

India: Gujral's Foreign Policy To Reflect Security Concerns

BK0306163696 Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 3 Jun 96 p 1

[Report by Prakash Nanda]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] "There has always been a broad domestic consensus on foreign policy issues and therefore there will be elements of continuity" in the foreign policy by the United Front [UF] government, said External Affairs Minister I.K. Gujral.

But within these broad parameters, the government may concentrate on certain priority areas, of which the "establishment of a National Security Council [NSC]" is the "prime one".

The establishment of the NSC figures in the election manifesto of Janata Dal, leading constituent of the United Front government. Mr. Gujral had played an important role in the preparation of the manifesto.

Mr. Gujral, who was also the foreign minister in the V.P. Singh regime, told THE TIMES OF INDIA, that "the importance of the NSC lies in the fact that it can provide varied inputs on the basis of which the most comprehensive picture of the country's security needs can be outlined".

Once this is done, "We will be in an exact position to know what should be our endeavour in the foreign policy arena, particularly in the fields of economic and nuclear diplomacy," he said.

"For instance, whether India should have a nuclear deterrent or not is to be based on the most scientific and systematic assessment of the country's security environment. This task can be best done by an agency like the NSC," he said.

Mr. Gujral argued, "The point is that there should be no ambiguity in the minds of our people about the steps we are going to take to safeguard our security."

He, however, avoided specifying what should be the composition of the NSC, saying, "More important is the idea itself. The details can always be worked out through discussions and consultations at the appropriate level". However, he hinted that top-level expertise from all the available sources in the country could be associated with the functioning of the NSC with necessary institutional arrangements and adequate resources.

According to Mr. Gujral, the other priority in the UF government's foreign policy could be regional cooperation. "There has been a significant trend in international politics in recent years, and that is the shift in emphasis from globalisation to regionalisation," he pointed out.

Citing the examples of the European Union, NAFTA, APEC, and ASEAN, Mr. Gujral said, "We must strengthen the SAARC [South Asia Association of Regional Cooperation] by establishing SAFTA (South Asian Free Trade Area). In fact, attempts should be made to include Afghanistan and Myanmar [Burma] in the SAARC".

When asked about the sincerity of Pakistan in making the SAARC a success, Mr. Gujral pointed out the recent decision of Pakistan to import sugar from India and how its Commerce Minister Mukhtar Ahmad had said that politics and economics do not go together.

India: Further on Defense Minister's Promise of Modernization

BK0406060096 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 3 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The defense minister, Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav, says the government will give priority to the modernization of the armed forces and efforts will be made to get adequate resources for this purpose. He was addressing a press conference after assuming office at South Block in New Delhi this morning. Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav said the defense sector would continue to get due importance and all efforts would be made to ensure that the armed forces do not suffer. He said there would be greater transparency in defense deals:

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[Begin Yadav recording in Hindi] Whatever is happening is happening in Kashmir, [words indistinct]. Our party has acknowledged it and they acknowledged it too. My party had already (?presented) a proposal. We have always said there should be no (?interference) in Kashmir. [passage indistinct] [end recording]

The adviser to the defense minister, Dr. Abdul Kalam, said the country's Light Combat Aircraft will be ready for a test flight by the end of this year. It will be ready for normal flights by March 1997, and by the end of next year the Light Combat Aircraft will fly with the indigenously developed (?Cauvery) engine.

The defense secretary said a contract has been signed with Russia for a 12,000 crore rupee upgradation program for 125 [figure as heard] MiG-21 fighter aircraft.

India: Finance Minister To Dilute Pro-Reform Agenda

BK0306164296 Delhi HINDUSTAN in Hindi 3 Jun 96 p 1

[Report by Nitya Chakraborty]

[FBIS Translated Text] Mr P. Chidambaram, who took over as the new finance minister, is faced with the most challenging task of his career. He is expected to balance the expectations of the corporate sector and the foreign investors with the pro-social sector bias of the UF's [United Front] minimum programme.

Mr Chidambaram is identified closely with the economic policies of the previous government. Former Finance Minister Manmohan Singh and Mr Chidambaram were very popular among the investors, both Indian and foreign.

While the international financial institutions and the potential foreign investors are certainly happy at Mr Chidambaram's coming to the North Block, the power equations in the UF will certainly compel the new finance minister to dilute some of the pro-reform agenda of the previous regime.

The immediate task of the new finance minister is to start exercises on the 1996-97 budget and here the UF is committed to convey to the people, in general that its approach is fundamentally different from Manmohanomics. The thrust will have to be on expanding the public distribution system and, if necessary, increasing subsidy to take care of the requirements of the people.

Similarly, the agenda on tax reforms will be fine tuned to give raising tax exemption limits priority, thereby benefitting the salary earners at the lower level rather than going for the reduction of the corporate tax rate.

The UF parties, especially the Left parties have been demanding the increase of the tax exemption level to Rs [rupees] 50,000 a year and in the first UF budget. There will be a lot of political pressure on the new finance minister to take concrete measures for giving relief to the common salary earners.

As regards the fiscal policy, the fiscal deficit came down in the first phase of the reforms but again in 1994-95 and 1995-96, the trends were disturbing. The revenue deficit on the other hand, has not shown any decline over the last few years. In fact, it has grown from 2.6 percent of GDP in 1991-92 to 3.4 percent in 1995-96. This implies that the government at the Centre and the States have not been able to harnesstheir current expenditure.

With the strong influence of the regional parties in the UF government, it will be difficult for the Finance Ministry to persuade the State governments to ensure fiscal prudence. While the UF government is sure to re-examine the present Central-State fiscal relations, the fact remains that the kitty is small and unless the State governments ensure fiscal discipline, the revenue deficit will continue to increase at a high rate leading to a fiscal crisis of a serious magnitude.

The Narasimha Rao government's policies have led to a fall in capital expenditure in the reform years and this does not augur well for a growing economy. The UF government is committed to reversing this trend but this will require strong political will and the cooperation of the State governments. Will Mr Chidambaram get enough political support to ensure fiscal discipline during his tenure in the Finance Ministry?

In 1995-96, a fundamental focus on inflation control urged the Rao government to adopt tough money policies to restrict growth of money supply.

While aggregate money supply grew at a relatively low rate of 15.1 percent between Jan. 1995 and Jan. 1996, the growth was even lower at 7.4 percent between April 1995 to Jan. 1996 as compared to 22.2 percent for the corresponding period of 1994-95.

India: Further on Finance Minister's Statement on Economic Program

BK0406053196 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 3 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The new government at the center will continue the program of tax reforms and attract both domestic and foreign capital to achieve higher levels of investment. In a statement in New Delhi today, [3 June] the finance minister, Mr. P. Chidambaram, spelt out the government's economic policy. A report by the news desk:

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[Begin unidentified correspondent recording] The finance minister's statement came a day before the expected date of release of the United Front's detailed paper on its approach to common minimum program. Interpreting the mandate on economic reforms, Mr. Chidambaram said it reflected both the consensus and the differences. He believed that the United Front is committed to reconciling the differences and enlarging the areas of consensus. The finance minister spelt out some of the basic themes of the policy which he said was not exhaustive but only illustrative. The policies reflect a firm and pragmatic approach to high growth with a commitment to social development.

Items on the fiscal front include continuation of tax reforms, fiscal prudence, and austerity. Coming to the infrastructural sector, the focus would be on attracting capital, both domestic and foreign, to achieve higher levels of investments and channeling the bulk of more investments into core and infrastructure sector. Reforming and restructuring of public sector enterprises and opening up of agricultural sector also form the main thrust in Mr. Chidambaram's theme. According to him, the other policies of the United Front government include targeting subsidies for the poor, social justice, and alleviation of poverty. Mr. Chidambaram welcomed debate and discussion, which he said was natural and healthy on the best modern manner in which the reforms should be attempted. [end recording]

Iran

Iran: Spokesman Denies Iranian Involvement in Bahrain 'Plot'

LD0306155396 Tehran IRNA in English 1533 GMT 3 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, June 3, IRNA — Foreign Ministry spokesman Mahmud Mohammadi here Monday strongly refuted allegations of any Iranian interference in the internal affairs of other countries, including Bahrain. Mohammadi called as "totally baseless" the allegations of Bahraini officials on Monday that Iran was involved in a plot for toppling the government of Bahrain.

He said the Islamic Republic of Iran advices the Bahraini government against being influenced by the conspiracies of the enemies of the Islamic ummah. He said the Bahraini stance was a result of instigations by outsiders, and will have no outcome other than the straining of bilateral ties and paving the way for presence of foreign powers in the region. Mohammadi reiterated that Tehran had always been for regional cooperation in order to restore stability and security.

Dispatches from Manama report that the information minister of Bahrain Muhammad al-Mutawwa' on Monday alleged that Iran was involved in a plot to overthrow the Bahraini government. Reports also said that Bahrain was planning to recall its ambassador from Tehran.

Iran: Commentary Denies Iran Interfering in Bahrain's Affairs

LD0306125896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 3 Jun 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The 59th Persian Gulf Cooperation Council's [PGCC] session of foreign ministers was held on Sunday, June 2, in the Saudi capital of Riyadh. This time too, the declaration issued by the PGCC, once again, repeats its unjustified claim over the Greater and Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa islands.

Earlier the PGCC had, on various occasions, brought up the topic of the UAE's claim over the islands. However, the Islamic Republic of Iran has constantly declared ownership of the Greater and Lesser Tunbs and Abu Musa islands its indisputable rights. Meanwhile, Iran has expressed readiness to hold talks with the UAE officials in order to remove any misunderstandings in the 1971 agreement and in Mr. Shaykh Zayid Bin Sultan's [Al Nuhayyan] letter to the Iranian President Mr. Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani.

But this time, an astounding point in the PGCC's declaration is Iran's intervention in the internal affairs of the PGCC member-states, including Bahrain. Iran considers the outbreak of tensions in Bahrain the result of a lack of democracy in that country and people's call for political and social freedom, including the opening of the Bahraini Parliament, and denies any allegations of wrongdoing levelled against it. Beyond that, conspiracies hatched by imperialist powers in creating splits among Muslim countries have given rise to such tensions. This comes at a time when Islamic countries of the region are in greater need of solidarity and unity as compared to the past.

Hence political observers assess the PGCC's claims in its recent declaration over Iran's military might posing a threat to peace and security in the region, in the same line.

Elsewhere, Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesman [Mahmud Mohammadi], in response to the declaration denying all allegations levelled against Iran stated: These days, U.S. efforts to make the Zionist regime a domineering power in the Middle East is the gravest of threats to the region. Hence, we should not allow regional peace and security be endangered by Islam's

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enemies or public opinion be deflected by the Zionist regime in regional countries.

Iran: Deputy—Airbus Settlement Invalid Without Majles Approval

LD0406113296 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 29 May 96 p 2

[Unattributed report: "Majles Deputy from Tehran Movahhedi-Savoji Writes to President Rafsanjani To Complain About Compromise Reached With America Over Airbus Victims"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In a letter to President Rafsanjani, Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin Movahhedi-Savoji, Majles deputy from Tehran, described any kind of settlement reached between the Governments of Iran and America concerning the payment of compensation to the families of the victims of the Iranian Airbus [brought down by the USS Vincennes in 1988] without the approval of the Majles as invalid.

In his letter to the president, he mentions: The news of the settlement reached between the Governments of Iran and America was recently announced by the Bureau of International Legal Services, while the Majles and people of Iran were not aware of the nature of the settlement and the way the rightful demands of the Islamic Republic were going to be met.

The letter stresses the need for complete adherence to Article 139 of the Constitution in relation to Iranian claims against America over the U.S. military crime in the Persian Gulf, the missile attack against the Airbus passenger plane, and the tragic killing of 290 women, children, and civilians.

In two other letters to the foreign and interior ministers, Movahhedi-Savoji has requested the legal prosecution and punishment of a Turkish Embassy diplomat who killed two of our compatriots by car and escaped. The letter says: "Why have the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Interior been negligent for some time about the identification, prosecution, and arrest of the said person?"

Iran: U.S. Decisions on Use of Journalists as 'Spies' Discussed

NC0106131896 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 26 May 96 p 16

[Political commentary: "American Journalists — CIA's Toys"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Following extensive objections by news and political circles the U.S. House of Representatives almost unanimously approved a law banning the use of journalists as CIA spies on their foreign assignments.

In an addendum pertaining to the U.S. espionage budget, the House of Representatives expressed its view, with 417 votes in favor, six against the bill banning espionage agencies, including the CIA, from using journalists and correspondents to collect information.

Last winter the CIA espionage organization announced its despicable decision to use correspondents for espionage purposes. The report was published in THE WASHINGTON POST, which revealed that the CIA chief had defended his decision before U.S. congressional representatives. That decision meant using journalists under cover to carry out espionage activities.

The use of a journalist, priest, trader, or diplomat for espionage is nothing new. For years the Americans have used such cover to increase the coefficient [zarib] of the success of their intelligence and espionage activities within the United States and abroad.

The only novelty in this tactic is that it is being announced publicly. This declaration of the use of correspondents, priests, or the followers of any other vocation for espionage purposes is also a blatant insult to the sanctity of such positions and responsibilities and another sign against human values and conventional international norms.

While the announcement of the ban on the use of journalists for spying by the U.S. House of Representatives is, ostensibly, an overt retreat by U.S. intelligence circles in the face of mounting public pressure inside and outside the United States, it is intrinsically fraught with three kinds of deviousness.

First, this decision does not include those spies who go to other countries posing as journalists; it only pertains to the use of professional journalists for espionage activities. Accordingly, the ban approved last week by the U.S. House of Representatives permits CIA spies to go abroad on assignment disguised as journalists.

Second, the ban was announced publicly. Some political observers believe the announcement regarding the use of journalists for spying is mere propaganda aimed at halting a wave of protest, especially by American journalists, against the U.S. espionage organization.

In recent months officials of U.S. news media and their correspondents have expressed their objections to the CIA's use of journalists for spying in view of their heightening mistrust and the increasing dangers journalists face on foreign assignments. They believe the use of CIA officials in the guise of correspondents will also pose similar dangers for them. Such measures

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project U.S. journalists as spies by nature as far as foreign countries are concerned.

Such apprehension led CIA chief John Deutsch to assure executive managers of the mass media that the espionage agency does not intend to use their services for CIA assignments. He conceded that this would only be done in special cases.

The third devious thing about the U.S. House of Representatives' decision is the U.S. President's right of veto on its decisions. It enables the President to revoke such a ban in special circumstances after presenting his decision to Congress.

So, with this ban, the "special circumstances" have not been clarified, and these "circumstances" can always be used as a license to use journalists for spying inside the United States and abroad.

Those inside American society or outside who are familiar with the tyrannical nature of the White House echelons know that the implementation of the decision to use journalists for spying is more in keeping with the nature of White House officials than a ban on such activities. Accordingly, the ban resembles a political ploy more than a retreat based on public objection.

Iran: Radio Comments on Taleban's Failure 'To Face Reality'

LD0106193896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pashto 1230 GMT 1 Jun 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] According to news sources, the Taleban group has intensified its efforts to form a coalition with factions based in Nangarhar Province in eastern Afghanistan. The Taleban group has invited the leaders of four Nangarhar-based factions to visit Kandahar.

Taleban's aim in forming a political-military coalition is to confront the accord concluded between Rabbani's government and Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party]. Meanwhile, Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi's Enqlab-e Eslami [Islamic Revolution] party, Pir Sayyed Ahmad Gaylani's Mahaz-e Meli-ye Eslami [National Islamic Front], and Yunis Khales' Hezb-e Eslami have somehow reacted positively to Rabbani and Hekmatyar's agreement. Some of these parties have even spoken of possible participation in the future Afghan coalition government. In fact, the Taleban group has redoubled its efforts in the political arena, in contrast to its previous solitary political approach, to prevent the formation of further alliances against it. Taleban's invitation to the factions based in Nangarhar Province is a move along these lines.

According to political observers, Taleban's new diplomatic and political moves can possibly be interpreted as the acceptance of political realities. Taleban have shifted their attention to seeking the help of small factions to confront their enemies. In the international arena, they have also started new diplomatic moves. The visit to Germany by a Taleban political and economic delegation is an example. Taleban's new initiatives clearly show that it wants to exploit opportunities in the internal and external equation of Afghanistan. The increasing possibilities of Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Eslami's participation in Rabbani's government and the dispatch of a new United Nations' envoy for Afghanistan, reported to be a German diplomat, are all new conditions. However, according to most observers, Taleban's recent political moves in the internal and external arena, will not bring it any political benefits.

Inside Afghanistan, Taleban is considering forming a political alliance with groups which will not increase their strength. The recent diplomatic moves by Taleban in the international arena also show its disinclination to face reality.

Iran: Possible Repercussions of Iraq-UN Accord Discussed

NC0106120196 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 23 May 96 p 12

[Editorial by Mohammad 'Ali Talebi-Khakiani: "The Iraq-UN Agreement"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Following the fourth round of Iraq-UN talks, the oil-for-food deal was signed. It allows the Baghdad government to export 700,000 barrels of oil per day under UN supervision. In this way, Iraq could earn $2 billion in six months. Half the amount would be spent on food and medicines for the Iraqi people; a third would go toward reparations for the Persian Gulf war, especially to Kuwait; and a sixth would be paid to the United Nations for dismantling the Iraqi arsenal of weapons of mass destruction.

Some 260 to 300 million dollars of the income would be distributed under direct U.S. supervision to the three Kurd-inhabited provinces (al-Sulaymaniyah, Dahuk, and Irbil) for their needs. The accord says the Iraqi oil would be exported through the Karkuk pipeline to the port of Yumurtalik in Turkey.

What is certain is that Baghdad's acceptance of the Security Council resolution will have economic and political consequences for Iraq and the region. The political effects of the acceptance of Resolution 986 must be considered:

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There is no doubt that the signing of the UN accord will mitigate the extensive problems of the war-weary people in Iraq, and Baghdad is optimistic that in this way it can strengthen its shaky position. The people are fed up after two consecutive wars (the imposed eight-year war with Iran and the Persian Gulf war), which failed to achieve any notable result, yet sparked uprisings against the central government.

The reasons for these uprisings can be found in the reign of terror by the Ba'thist Iraqi regime, proliferating economic problems, and a power struggle.

The Ba'thist regime believes the limited sale of oil will enable it to reduce some of its problems and, ostensibly, boost the role of the central government at home.

The Baghdad government hopes its acceptance of UN Resolution 986 will be a precursor to the elimination of the embargoes against it. This idea, which is being backed by the Governments of Russia and France, particularly as agreements worth billions of dollars have been signed with Iraq, can change the situation somewhat in favor of a greater presence by these two countries in Iraq and the region.

The United States and Britain, as the main formulators of the embargo against Iraq, are seeking to extort privileges from Iraq to boost their presence there.

This is while Iraq's national sovereignty, with the direct presence of the United States in the north and in the three Kurd-inhabited provinces, is seriously under question, with much negative fallout, examples of which are the long-term or permanent U.S. presence in the region and the disruption of the balance of forces in the region.

In general Baghdad's acceptance of UN Security Council Resolution 986 is a sign of the weakness and surrender of the Ba'thist Iraqi regime before the pressure exerted by the United States and Britain.

Baghdad tried hard to change the UN-stipulated conditions but we must now await the plots of the United States, the Zionist regime, and Turkey in northern Iraq, which will certainly not be to the benefit of the people of Iraq.

Iran: Oil Exploration Pact With Azerbaijan To Be Signed 4 Jun

LD0306204696 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1930 GMT 3 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The final agreement to extract oil and gas from the Shahdeniz field in Azerbaijan will be signed officially tomorrow, 4 June.

According to a report by the Central News Unit, this will be the the third consortium of foreign companies to extract oil from the Caspian Sea fields near the shores of Azerbaijan. Members of this new consortium and their shares are as follows: British Petroleum, with 25 percent share; Stat Oil of Norway, 25 percent; the National Oil Company of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 10 percent; the Russian Luk Oil, 10 percent; ELF of France, 10 percent; the National Oil Company of Turkey, 9 percent; and the Azerbaijan State Oil Company, 11 percent.

Experts estimate that the Shahdeniz oilfield, 100 kilometers south of Baku, has reserves of 500 billion cubic metres of gas and 200 million tonnes of oil.

Iran: Foreign Ministry Official's Remarks on Sudan 'Distorted'

LD3105194596 Tehran IRAN in Persian 29 May 96 p 2

[Report from the news service: "Director General of Arab Middle East and North Africa Desk of the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs: My Remarks Have Been Distorted"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The director general of the Arab Middle East and North Africa Desk of the Foreign Ministry has said: My remarks in an interview with Egypt's Middle East News Agency (MENA) have been distorted.

Cologne radio [Deutsche Welle] reported that Seyyed Mohammad Kazem Khonsari in an interview with MENA in Damascus had denied any cooperation between Tehran and Khartoum. This source, citing Khonsari added: Tehran is interested in expanding relations with Cairo in all fields, including political and economic ones, to the highest level possible.

Khonsari in an interview with IRNA said: In that interview, it was stressed that Tehran-Khartoum relations were not to the detriment of any third country and that Tehran had no coope.ation with any Egyptian opposition group.

The ministerial adviser and director-general of Arab Middle East and North Africa of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs added: In the interview with MENA, it was also stressed that the Islamic Republic of Iran and Egypt were cooperating in international forums and that we expected economic relations between Tehran and Cairo to expand further.

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Iran: Paper Condemns Turkish Diplomat's Behavior

LD3105192796 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 29 May 96 p 3

[Unattributed report: "Where Is the Killer Diplomat?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] It is about two weeks since the killing of two of our innocent compatriots in Tehran by a Turkish diplomat, but there is still no news about the killer.

A mother and daughter, who were out shopping for the daughter's wedding, never returned home. (Ceng Karadoman), driving a Turkish embassy diplomatic car, killed them.

The Turkish diplomat, who was without conscience, left the scene of the accident. According to reliable source he has fled Iran with the assistance of the Turkish embassy. It seems that he had mistaken Iran for Turkey and one evening was driving at a high speed, while under the influence of alcohol, and killed the mother and daughter.

Does diplomatic immunity make the Turks so impudent as to kill two innocent people? The bereaved family have a question for the authorities: Where is the killer hiding? Does the issuing of a statement by Turkey ease the pain of the bereaved family?

Of course, the bereaved family are taking legal action. However, it should be pointed out that Ceng Karadoman, the Turkish political attache, has a record of moral corruption, drinking, and espionage. Apparently he committed his misdeeds at night and certain cases have been referred to the relevant authorities which are under review.

Iran: Commentary—Election Shows Deep Chasms Among Israelis

LD0106132496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 1 Jun 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Final electoral results in the occupied Palestine declared Binyamin Netanyahu, leader of the Likud Party, victor of the elections. It was the first time that the Zionist prime minister was elected directly. Binyamin Netanyahu gained the nearest of leads, namely, an 0.9 percent edge over his rival, Labor Party leader Shimo'n Peres.

Political analysts maintain the tight electoral race within the Zionist regime stems from deep chasms among the Zionists. As a matter of fact the division of the Zionists into two moderate and radical groups goes back to a 50-year long propaganda waged by Zionist leaders. Decades of propaganda by the Zionist rabbis over Israel's domination on a strip of land stretching from the Nile to the Euphrates, simultaneous with the racist propaganda over the elimination of the Palestinian nation, have proven to backfire on the Zionists themselves, creating rifts within the Zionist ranks. All such horrendous propaganda led to the assassination of Yitzhaq Rabin, who was one of the main founders of the Zionist regime, last November and have poured buckets of cold water on the so-called architect of the Middle East peace process Shimo'n Peres' efforts to dominate the area culturally and economically through fresh domineering tactics.

Another half of the population aspires to materialize Zionist goal of a greater Israel through dragging the regime out of isolation and building of a ties with the Arab countries. It is interesting to note that it is likely that the prime minister come face to face with an opposition coalition of the leftist parties; an issues which indicates the chasm between the Zionists, dividing them into two groups and hence bringing about hurdles to the Zionist sovereignty.

Amid all this, while the Likud party leader's victory has taken on considerable dimensions within political and news circles of the Islamic and Arab worlds, most surveys point out to a similarity of guidelines in Israel. Hence the political circles believe the only differences among the Zionists lies in the modus operandi of attaining their common goals and hence could not be defined as any change in the ruling Zionist party system.

Iran: Paper on Relations With Egypt, Israeli Influence on Policy

LD3105233896 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 29 May 96 pp 1-2

[Unattributed editorial: "The Cairo Regime Must Reform Itself"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. The world of Islam is today witnessing bitter and tragic events which have gradually turned and continue to turn some of the regional countries into parade-ground for the Zionists. This has been caused by a great act of treachery committed by some intimidated countries of the region.

However, if we wanted to understand the causes of this great tragedy we would have to look at the disgraceful "Camp David" agreement and the actions of the Cairo regime.

Of course, in almost every case, negotiations are advancing outside the sphere of influence of the Cairo regime, and let us not forget that the Cairo regime has

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always complained about its failure to act as a middleman in the negotiations because the regimes which are negotiating with the Zionists are following unilateral policies and are not coordinating their activities with Egypt.

Thus, the Cairo regime is not getting paid for its activities but is being blamed by nations for the shame that has resulted from the gradual fall of the intimidated regional regimes into the hands of the Zionists.

In such circumstances independent governments, which are committed to the Palestinian cause, have maintained their clear and confidence-building policies towards the Zionist regime and the compromise talks, and they have continued to believe that the current tragic and humiliating trend will only end to the detriment of the peoples and governments of the region.

The bitter experiences of the past two decades indicate clearly that the Zionists have always utilized the weaknesses of the timid regional regimes to their own advantage and that they are tempted to continue this form of action and use every opportunity.

It is for this very reason that the United States and Israel are fearful of any popular Islamic movement in the region. They have learned from experience that such movements will strengthen the Palestinian cause, will warn compromise-seekers about the actual conditions of the process and will undermine and damage the process of treason.

And it is in this context that the increasing American and Israeli hatred and anger towards the Islamic revolution and the global Islamic movement must be understood.

Naturally, in this frame of mind, some regional regimes, which are under the influence of the United States and Israel, have been ordered by their masters to propagate, agitate and create a fanfare against the Islamic revolution and the global Islamic movement, and to repeat the propaganda leads, as desired by the Zionists, against Islamic Iran.

Portraying popular and Islamic movements as "extremist tendencies" and accusing them of supporting terrorism and interfering in the affairs of other countries have been repeated so many times that they are even repulsive for the people who say them. But it is surprising that whenever regimes which are opposed to people find themselves in trouble, they resort to using such decayed instruments of propaganda.

The Cairo regime too, is using such methods in the hope of bringing about a miracle and transforming its own disturbed and seedy conditions.

Apparently the Egyptian regime has recently felt that things have changed in Iran in its favor, and being as desperate as it is, it has suddenly become sentimental and has gone as far as setting conditions for improvements in relations between Tehran and Cairo.

The deputy foreign minister of Egypt has set the conditions by saying: "In order to improve Tehran-Cairo relations, it is not sufficient to express an inclination. If Tehran wants to improve and expand its relations with Cairo, it must prove its goodwill in actions, not words."

On many occasions Cairo has listed the inabilities and needs of its foreign policy as the suitable conditions for the improvement of relations between the two countries.

But the tragedy lies in the fact that the list of inabilities and needs in the foreign policy of Egypt is again the embodiment of the U.S. and Israeli demands. In other words Egypt continues to act as the Zionist loudspeaker in the region.

In view of the shameful events and outcomes of the Sharm al-Shaykh conference, Cairo was expected to become embarrassed about its own actions to seek a revision in its treacherous actions.

But the existing evidence indicates that Cairo is not thinking about a revision and it now has the mission to repeat its former operations.

One of the main ideals of the Islamic revolution has always been to support Islamic movements.

Cairo and its Camp David masters must rest assured that Islamic Iran will never set aside its tenets and ideals for the satisfaction of this or that government.

It is up to the Egyptian regime to reform itself and to understand the objective and realistic truths of the region and Egypt itself.

A rule of guns cannot change the situation in Egypt in the favor of the Zionists for ever.

If they want to respect the will of the proud people of Egypt, they should bring to power a popular regime which relies on people's vote and they should free Egypt from the Zionist yoke of captivity. The Egyptian regime has set three main missions for itself. First, to bring about conditions favorable for the expansion of the Camp David agreement and compromise with the Zionists.

Second, to suppress the proud people of Egypt and to break the will of this Muslim nation in facing global arrogance and Zionism. Third, to act as an enemy and to portray popular Islamic movements as extremist tendencies of terror.

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All three strategies are among the most fundamental policies of the United States and Israel in the Middle East.

Until the day that Egypt stops reflecting the dictated policies of the United States and Israel there will be no miracles of improvement in relations between Cairo and Tehran.

But one must not forget that the proud nation of Egypt which enjoys a bright record in the affairs of Islam and the region, is undoubtedly able to break the Zionist chains of captivity and to return Egypt to the arms of the Islamic world.

Iran: Daily Urges Mideast Unity To Withstand Israeli 'Aggression'

LD0206084696 Tehran IRNA in English 0546 GMT 2 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, June 2, IRNA — The Tehran-Riyadh-Cairo axis should be formed and strengthened to pave the way for dynamic cooperation among all Muslim countries of the region, the English-language 'TEHRAN TIMES' wrote Sunday, [2 June] adding that if countries in the Middle East bridged their gap and became united, they would be able to withstand probable Israeli aggression.

Noting that the Likud Party is expansionist and that the bipolar world order no longer exists, it warned, "Muslim countries are encircled by hostile forces...(their) enemies receive unconditional material and moral support from the White House.

Moreover, the Ankara-Tel Aviv axis today is a serious threat to Syria, Egypt, Iran and other regional states, it underlined.

Stressing that Iran, Saudi Arabia and Egypt are the key Muslim states in the Middle East, the editorial said that these three countries should spare no effort in preparing a ground for accommodation and cooperation, emphasizing that if they expanded trilateral relations, smaller countries in the region would follow suit.

With Iran being a strategic ally of Syria, rapproachment among Tehran, Riyadh and Cairo would effectively mean the formation of a powerful Muslim bloc of Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria, it underscored, concluding, however, that in order to materialize this great dream, Tehran, Riyadh, Cairo and Damascus should sacrifice certain limited national interests for the sake of larger regional considerations.

Iran: Qom Becomes Province

96LA0239C London KEYHAN in Persian 2 May 96 p 4

[FBIS Translated Text] Qom was changed into a province last week. The urgent bill on changing Qom to a province was ratified in the Majles last Tuesday. The capital of Qom province will be the city of Qom, and its affiliated districts are Khalajestan, Jafarabad, and Kahak.

According to this ratification, the organizational personnel, the equipment, and the budget and funds related to this change will be deducted from the resources of Tehran Province and allocated to the newly founded province.

The first vice president, the ministers of interior and economic affairs and finance, and the directors of the Plan and Budget Organization and the National Administrative and Employment Organization are responsible for implementing this plan. The idea of Qom becoming a province was on the minds of Ayatollah Khomeyni and other clerics since the beginning of the revolution and in recent years as well, and constant emphasis was placed on making Qom a province, mostly for publicity purposes.

Iran: Khamene'i Remembers Late Imam Khomeyni

LD0306141696 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0600 GMT 3 Jun 96

[Address by Ayatollah 'Ali Hoseyni Khamene'i, leader of the Islamic revolution, at the tomb of the late Imam Khomeyni in Tehran — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted]

Dear people of Iran, let me tell you this: You, the great people of Iran, have advanced every day despite the pressures and the threats of the enemy. This is the first point. No-one can deny the fact that serving hands and able arms have advanced the country in the past 17 years. Iran is no longer the country that it was during the royal tyranny with all its chaos, deprivations, and discriminations. The achievements of the country since the revolution 17 years ago are more than all the achievements of that evil and corrupt regime. This was the first point: progress.

The second point is this: All the progress was achieved while our enemies, that is the United States and its political and economic allies, were threatening us. They told us: Gentlemen, you will suffer from economic sanctions. They said: You will die of hunger. They said: The road to progress will be closed to you. They said

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this and they said that. But, thank God, there has been much progress despite their threats, despite their enmity, and despite their pressures. This was the second point.

The third point is: My dear ones! My brothers and sisters! Oh, great nation! You should know that today, the major aim of America and arrogance is to force the revolution, the Islamic Republic, and the Iranian nation to take back its word; to declare that it has taken back its word, it has taken back the word of the Imam [Khomeyni]. All the efforts of arrogance are directed at this. Why this? Because it sees that the imam's message has awakened Muslim nations. Look at the world's different nations — especially Muslim nations — and see how they have become influenced by the message of the exalted imam. Arrogance has realized that if it wants to silence the nations, put them in their place and make them abandon the right path, the only way is to do something so that these nations would see that Islamic Iran and the Iran of the imam has abandoned its path. In this way it hopes to make everyone lose hope and abandon their path. Arrogance has understood this. All its efforts are directed at this.

Today they are bringing pressure to bear on the Islamic Republic of Iran's government to give in on the question of Israel, on Islamic issues, to stop chanting Islamic slogans and reduce all these proclamations about Islam and the Koran, which are commonly shared by Muslim countries. All the pressure is aimed at this.

What I have to say is that if the Iranian nation wants to continue the path of glory and progress — just as, God be thanked, it has done in these past years, thanks to the blessings of the powerful and serving hands in the Islamic Republic of Iran's Government, which endeavored and worked hard in different sectors and progressed — if the Iranian nation wants to advance and obtain the results of the path of glory, development, reconstruction, affluence, then the way to do this is to continue steadfastness and endurance in the face of the enemies and arrogance. [chants of God is great!]

In the past several years, the Iranian people have achieved much and they must guard these achievements. All sections of the nation, particularly the officials of the Islamic Republic, must act wisely, intelligently, and sensibly in order to prevent the destruction of these achievements, be they direct outcome of the revolution — such as popular government, popular sovereignty, popular presidency, popular deputies, and such — or things that are the indirect result of the revolution — such as construction, revolutionary work and revolutionary art by revolutionary elements in the government or in other organizations. These things must be guarded wisely and intelligently by the Iranian people and by government officials. The way to guard these achievements and to create more is for the Iranian nation and officials to follow the path that the noble imam had sketched by his actions; the path of resistance in the face of the enemy's expectations and endurance in the face of unrestrained fabrications by those abroad. [public chants of approval]

People talk about the path of the imam and the line of the imam. But what is the path of the imam? It is too general to say that the path of the imam is Islam or the revolution. It is obvious that the line of the imam is the path of Islam and the revolution. Indeed, no-one is against Islam or the revolution. But to meet the expectations of that noble man, the father of the revolution and the engineer of Islamic Iran, is to learn from his perseverance and resistance in the face of the enemy. He did not fear the enemy. The enemy's threats did not move him. No-one can accuse the noble imam of unwise acts. No! If learned people looked carefully they could understand the correctness of his path that took him toward his aims. This is my statement at the seventh anniversary of the demise of that noble man.

All the officials, the various sections, the public, and the Iranian nation must learn from the imam's perseverance in the face of the enemy's expectations. If other nations want to get anywhere this is the path to follow. The way to solve the Palestinian issue is to show resistance and endurance. The way to solve the various interventions of world arrogance in the region is to show endurance. The Iranian people should know that if it were not for the imam the great borders of Iran would not have been safe. The enemy would have violated the borders, would have stayed on our territory, and would have brought eternal shame on the Iranian nation. The imam's resistance did not allow this. Today, if you want to have a dear Iran, if you want to be a proud nation and if you want to materialize the aims of the noble imam — which were the aims of Islam and the revolution — you must not give in to the enemy's expectations. Thank God, the officials are as strong as a mountain. Today, the government of the Islamic Republic, the people's deputies, the judiciary, the Armed Forces, and the whole nation are standing like a iron wall against the enemy's expectations and will not blink in the face of their threats. Indeed, this is the fit and honorable path to follow.

The Americans want to advance their cause through threats. This is not possible. They cannot even do it through intervention. The Iranian nation will not turn a blind eye to the rights of the Palestinian people. The Americans say that we should turn a blind eye to the Palestinian people and sign the imposed compromise. It is obvious that the Iranian people, effectively and

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forcefully, reject this path and regard anyone who follows it a traitor. [public chants of "God is great," and "death to Israel"]

The people should know that the message of the imam and the message of you great revolutionary people has spread throughout the world. Although seven years have passed since the demise of Imam [Khomeyni], his name and memory has not aged and will not age.

Of course, the propaganda of the enemy attempts to portray that the message of the revolution has declined in the world. But this is a lie and a falsification. Today, in all parts of the world, even places where there are no signs of a Muslim, the name and the symbol of your great revolution, the great movement of our nation, and the great movement of that noble man is evident among the people.

This is the path of might for Iran. This is the path of glory. This is the path of development for our territory. This is the path of welfare, victory, and prosperity. God willing, the Iranian nation will continue to pursue this path with might, and with God's grace the future generations will complete it.

Iran: Khamene'i Hails Message of Imam Khomeyni

LD0306091796 Tehran IRNA in English
0718 GMT 3 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, June 3, IRNA — The leader of the Islamic revolution Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i in a speech at Imam Khomeyni's mausoleum in southern Tehran this morning said that the seventh anniversary of the demise of the late imam is reminder of a very bitter experience for the Iranian nation and Muslims of the world. The supreme leader added that the anniversary provides an opportunity for the nation to demonstrate its sentiments and feelings to the late imam. "Every year the ceremony is held in a more meaningful manner and with renewed vigilance and vigour," said the leader.

"This means that the Iranian nation despite the hostilities of enemies of the imam and the revolution has not given up the path of the Imam Khomeyni and has not turned away from the revolution, this also means that the imam has been victorious," added the supreme leader. More on victories of Imam Khomeyni, the leader said, one victory which is tangible and can be seen is the establishment of the Islamic Republic and destroying of the enemies. The late imam witnessed both these victories. The other victory, which is more important, is the victory of the path, thought, ideology and ideals of a great personality. Imam Khomeyni also witnessed this victory. On Imam Khomeyni's movement, Ayatollah Khamene'i said that the movement of the imam has many similarities with the movement of Imam Husayn (as). The salient point in both movements is the factor of resistance, which is of great importance.

In his resistance the late imam was a true follower of Imam Husayn (as), a phenomenon which led to the victory of the revolution while ensuring it in future. More people are now turning to Islam and the Iranian revolution. "Imam never wavered and hesitated in his determination and continued the path," said the supreme leader.

Following the establishment of the Islamic Republic, the enemies, the world oppressors and bullying powers started to challenge the Islamic Republic because their interests and expansionist policies were seriously endangered and threatened. Faced with all these problems and pressure, anyone except Imam Khomeyni would have wavered and retreated, said the leader. The plots included all-out political attacks on Iran which at times could be paralyzing. Such attacks were withstood by the nation and the nation did not falter. The late imam never retreated a sigle step in the face of the joint attacks of the U.S. and the former Soviet Union. This is similar to the resistance put up by Imam Husayn (as), Ayatollah Khamene'i told the huge gathering of mourners.

More on enemy plots, the leader said that the imposed 1980-88 war and the massive destruction and economic difficulties created by it, would have forced anyone to kneel down. There was no argument that it was not only the Iraqi regime which was fighting against Iran, rather the U.S., France, USSR, NATO and all powers were engaged in a full-fledged war against Iran. "If imam was weak, he would have dropped the idea of insisting on Islamic ideology and campaign against Israel. Imam stood against all these pressures," said Ayatollah Khamene'i.

The reason that imam accepted the resolution on ending Iraq-Iran war, was not because of these pressures, it was because of the economic problems that the officials had put before the imam and that the country could not continue to finance the war. Therefore, the imam accepted the resolution. "His acceptance of the resolution was not because of fear, attacks by the enemy, threat of U.S. involvement in the war. In the 10 years of imam's life in the post-revolution period, never for a single moment did he hesitate and falter because of the magnitude of the pressure of the enemy. He never retreated from his path." This made all enemies to realize that they cannot create fear in the heart of the imam. The enemy understood that the imam could not be threatened and defeated and thus had no alternative but to adjust itself to the revolution.

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Imam Khomeyni chose the line of Imam Husayn (as) in his path, movement and life and thus ensured the Islamic Republic and dissuaded the enemy from pressurizing Iran since the enemy realized that the imam cannot be threatened, added the leader.

On achievements of the Iranian nation, Ayatollah Khamene'i continued that the nation despite the enemy pressure has progressed more and more every day and the capable and able hands have taken the country towards further advancement, elimination of discrimination and eradication of poverty. The leader added that what has been accomplished in the post-revolution period was not achieved throughout the rule of the former corrupt regime. All this progress has been made despite continuous threats, hostilities, sanctions and embargoes of the enemies.

At present the main objective of the U.S. and imperialism is to make the revolution, nation and the Islamic Republic to take back their words and words of imam. This is because the enemy knows well that the message of imam has enlightened and awakened the world, the Muslims in particular, stressed Ayatollah Khamene'i.

To discourage the awakened nations, the oppressors are doing what they can to persuade the Islamic Republic to retreat from its path, to abandon the issue of Israel and drop supporting Islam and Quran.

"If the Iranian nation wants to continue the path of dignity, the path of progress, the path of construction, the path of prosperity, the sole path before it is to continue to resist the enemies of revolution, the oppressors," pointed out the leader.

Ayatollah Khamene'i recommended the Iranian nation to protect the great achievements of the revolution. He said the government and the nation should through wise steps prevent destruction of the accomplishments of the revolution. Means and ways of succeeding in this task, is holding on and continuing the line of resisting the enemy and the enemy demands, he said.

The line of the late imam, the father and the architect of the revolution, is resistance. The uncompromising attitude of the imam against enemy never faltered. "Resistance is the answer to all problems created by the oppressors in the region, the issue of Palestine," said Ayatollah Khamene'i.

The leader emphasized that the dignity of Iran and fulfillment of imam's ideals rests with resisting enemey demands. He said, "every official and every citizen is standing like a mountain against the enemy pressure and demands. This is the path of dignity and prosperity."

The leader added that the U.S. cannot force its way through force and threat, Iran cannot ignore the Palestinian nation, Iranian nation with all its might and power will continue to reject the line of compromise over the aspirations of the Palestinians.

Message of Imam Khomeyni has spread throughout the world and his memory is alive and will never fade away contrary to the wish of the enemies. "This is the path to glory, prosperity, progress and god willing the nation will continue this path and the future generations will complete it," concluded the leader.

Iran: Nateq-Nuri Elected Temporary Speaker of Fifth Majles

LD0206083896 Tehran IRNA in English 0534 GMT 2 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, June 2, IRNA — Hojjat ol-eslam 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri was elected temporary speaker of the fifth Majles here this morning.

Of the 241 deputies present in the open session of the Majles, Hojjat ol-Eslam Nateq-Nuri secured votes of 132 deputies.

The former interior minister, Hojjat ol-Eslam Abdollah Nuri secured 105 votes.

Hojjat ol-Eslam Nateq-Nuri, representing Tehran constituency in the Majles, was also speaker of the Majles in the previous four-year term.

Once evaluation of the credentials of the deputies are completed by the Majles, the deputies are to elect the permanent speaker for a period of one year.

Iran: Nateq-Nuri Says Deputies Should Follow Guidelines of Leader

LD0206104296 Tehran IRNA in English 0928 GMT 2 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, June 2, IRNA — Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri who was earlier elected as the speaker of the fifth Majles, expressed hope that with the help of God the fifth Majles will benefit from the supreme leader's guidelines and will implement them.

Addressing the deputies after being elected as the speaker in the Sunday morning session of the Majles, the hojjat ol-Eslam urged the newly-elected deputies to serve their constituencies during their four-year term and pay their duties to the nation.

Referring to approach of the 7th anniversary of demise of the late founder of the Islamic Republic, Imam Khomeyni, Nateq-Nuri said that present dignity and

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honor of the Islamic Republic are owed to the late imam's great personality.

He added that Iranians by attending the special ceremonies at Imam's mausoleum on Monday will pay their respect and tribute to the late leader of the revolution.

During the session Hojjat ol-Eslam Hasan Ruhani and Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohammad 'Ali Movahhedi-Kermani were also elected the first and second vice speakers of the Majles, respectively. They both served in the same capacity in the last year of the previous term of Majles.

Iran: Hezbollah Threatens To Close Majles, Blacklists New Members

MM0406113096 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 4 Jun 96 pp 1, 4

[Unattributed report: "Iranian Hezbollah Threatens To Close Majles"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Tehran, London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — Iranian Hezbollah has threatened to "close the doors" of the Majles if it departs from the revolution's course. The party stressed that it will publish a list of the new members whose membership it will seek to cancel before the Majles begins its proceedings. Tehran sources say that the blacklist could include 30 members of parliament.

The step in question is tantamount to a political coup through which Hezbollah is trying to recover part of the influence it enjoyed previously before losing it to the official institutions in Iran.

Ahmad Janani [as transliterated], a cleric and spokesman for Hezbollah, announced that the party "is above the law and government institutions."

The statement concluded by saying: "Our revolution belongs to Hezbollah, and the time has come for the party to confront the enemies who have infiltrated the institutions to destroy the revolution."

It seems that the brief statement is aimed against those loyal to President Hashemi-Rafsanjani who won 41 out of 270 seats in the elections held in the spring.

The Rafsanjani group is calling for economic reforms, efforts to end Iran's diplomatic isolation, and the lifting of some social restrictions, including easing the pressures imposed on the middle classes. [passage omitted].

Iran: Reasons Why Some Candidates Rejected

96LA0224G Tehran PAYAM-E DANESHJU in Persian 5 Mar 96 p 2

[FBIS Translated Text] On the first campaign day for candidates to the Fifth Islamic Consultative Majles, two candidates in the municipality of Sari were eliminated from the competition.

Based on this report, Hojjat ol-Eslam Seyyed Hasan Shoja'i-Kiasari, deputy from the Second, Third, and Fourth Majles terms and a candidate for the Fifth Majles, had his competence rejected by the Guardian Council.

At the same time, Ezzatollah Damadi, deputy from the Second and Third Majles terms and a candidate for the latest Islamic Consultative Majles, also announced his withdrawal. The announcement of the withdrawal by Ezzatollah Damadi and the rejection of the competence of Hojjat ol-Eslam Shoja'i-Kiasari were announced at a time when the campaign staffs for these candidates had distributed campaign posters for their candidates throughout the city.

Thus the number of candidates for the Fifth Majles in the Sari electoral precinct was reduced to 19. Likewise, the competence of two election candidates in the Province of Esfahan was rejected after final confirmation from the Guardian Council.

Dr. Hasan Kamran, the current Islamic Consultative Majles deputy and a candidate for the Fifth Islamic Consultative Majles from the electoral precinct of Esfahan, and Dr. Fazlollah Salvati, writer, philosopher, and university professor, a candidate for the Fifth Islamic Consultative Majles from the electoral precinct of Khomeynishahr, had their competence rejected. Their competence was initially rejected by the executive councils in the provinces, but with public protest and after the matter was re-investigated by the supervision councils in the provinces, Dr. Kamran was endorsed, The competence of Dr. Salvati, however, was rejected again. In the third stage, Dr. Kamran's competence was rejected in the Guardian Council and Dr. Salvati was confirmed, and then Dr. Kamran was also confirmed again.

After the change and the competence of these candidates was declared approved and it was announced that they could begin their own campaigns, on Thursday afternoon the governors announced that their competence had been rejected.

A member of the Central Elections Supervision Council said that 80 percent of the candidates whose competence was rejected had no kind of political or social problem or any record of violations or abuses.

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In an interview with IRNA's correspondent at the Khorramabad center, Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Abbasi-Fard added: Many would-be candidates had their competence rejected because of legal and election regulations such as being under or over age, not having the literacy to read or write, registering after the end of the administrative period, or having names similar to those of convicted criminals.

The member of the National Central Elections Supervision Council added: Some of the people think that those who registered for candidacy and had their competence rejected had acute social, political, or moral problems, yet this is not the case. Many of them already have key and sensitive positions or will be appointed to sensitive management positions in the future.

Concerning the election violations by some of the candidates, 'Abbasi-Fard said: If the candidates have all of the necessary qualifications for taking part in the elections but commit violations during the campaign that influence the outcome of the elections, the votes for them will be voided.

Iran: Mystery of Fallahian, Replacement

96LA0239D London KEYHAN in Persian 2 May 96 p 12

[FBIS Translated Text] It was expected that after the Fifth Majles elections, the air of mystery that had been created around 'Ali Fallahian would finally break, and it would become clear why this person, who in the past appeared at least twice a week in press conferences, Friday prayer ceremonies, or lectures and almost always expressed opinions about all issues, has been "hiding" for nearly two years.

Unverified reports indicate that Rafsanjani wanted to take charge of the Ministry of Information, retaining his present position of course, and appoint a trusted deputy over this ministry, which is undoubtedly the most important ministry of the Islamic Republic. However Khamene'i, who is cutting off Rafsanjani from the important leverage centers of power so that he will not be able to engage in any rooted action or even settle the struggle for power during the year and some months that remain until the presidential elections, has not agreed to this suggestion by Rafsanjani.

While sources that have published the news of the "great escape" of Fallahian on "bail" still insist on their opinion, other sources say that there has been no "great escape" and that the minister of information has been kept away from the "shooting range" of the Mikunus trial so that no problem will be created for the Islamic Republic. One of the problems is answering the international police, of which Iran is also a member and accordingly must send a person for whom an arrest warrant is issued to another member country to be put on trial. (The German Prosecutor's Office has issued a warrant for the arrest of Fallahian in connection with the murder in the Mikunus Restaurant.) Second, the Tehran regime places special importance on its relationship with Germany and is trying to prevent its erosion as much as possible. According to this account, Fallahian had reminded the leaders of the regime about such a possibility long before the warrant for his arrest was issued.

Iran: Paper Analyzes Khamene'i Message on Culture

LD3105210996 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 21 May 96 p 2

[Unattributed commentary: "Union of Volition and Understanding"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Culture is a very important subject, for it has to do with the mentality of people and the formation of human characters, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamene'i stated during a meeting with the minister of culture and Islamic guidance and a number of officials of the ministry.

In his speech the leader pointed out that a number of projects have already been prepared which have to be executed with care and understanding.

Over the years, the basic cultural and artistic values suitable for our Islamic society have been worked out, and no basic or comprehensive modifications would seem to be required. This is clearly corroborated by the leader's emphasis that the plans and programmes which have already been prepared have to be carried out carefully and that executive duties should be entrusted to people of sound understanding as well as managerial capabilities. For as Ayatollah Khamene'i pointed out "the will to act should be coupled with correct understanding" in order that desirable results may be obtained.

Misunderstanding of the basic principle and erroneous application of the principles will not only impede the course of cultural progress but will also have negative results because they will create doubts regarding the validity of the principles.

In the field of cinema, for instance, the misapplication of principles can have many undesirable effects. And while deploring the neglect of film makers in dealing with certain significant subjects — notable omissions are aspects of the history of the Islamic revolution — the leader emphasised the need for exporting valuable Iranian movies with properly prepared versions in foreign languages.

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Of particular interest is the leader's remark on the phenomenon of cultural assault which, as he pointed out, is taking global dimensions. The abuse of technological gadgetry such as the satellite has created grave concerns in many parts of the world. The prospect of whole nations' mentalities and attitudes being shaped by a few broadcasting centres is really appalling, and should be resisted.

Iran: Rafsanjani Addresses International Congress on Khomeyni

LD0106103796 Tehran IRNA in English 0832 GMT 1 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, June 1, IRNA — President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, addressing the second international congress on Imam Khomeyni and the culture of Ashura which opened at the Tehran University Friday evening, said the most distinguished features of Ashura, as well as the message of Imam Khomeyni and the Islamic revolution, are sacrifice and the fight against the monopolistic policies of arrogant powers.

The struggle against arrogance and infidels is a common aspect between the culture of Ashura and Imam Khomeyni's movement, noted the president, adding that Imam Hoseyn (as) [peace be upon him] was highly motivated by the feeling that atheism might spread worldwide.

The president said the emergence of a powerful Islamic Iran was one of the fruits of Imam Khomeyni's blessed movement, which was inspired by the Ashura culture.

From the political point of view, the fight against oppressors is a principle of the Ashura uprising. This idea has been given serious consideration in Iran, making the Islamic republic a bastion of Islamic culture and a source of inspiration for those who want to implement Islamic laws all over the world, he added.

Around 1,100 scholars and thinkers from all over the world are participating in the congress, which is to conclude on June 2.

The gathering was organized by the institute in charge of publishing Imam Khomeyni's works, in collaboration with the foundation for martyrs of the Islamic revolution.

Iran: Ayatollahs on Women's Exercises

96LA0239G London KEYHAN in Persian 16 May 96 p 1, 4

[FBIS Translated Text] Five ayatollahs from the Qom Seminary regard bicycles, boating, running, and horseback riding a danger to Islam and Iran and, on the whole, consider the movement of a woman's body before the eyes of men to be sexually provocative for them.

The officials of the Islamic Republic have tried in recent years to make the Qom Seminary more compatible with the advances in the world, but the comments of these five ayatollahs indicate that they were born about 1400 years too late.

The five ayatollahs, in response to the request for their religious edicts regarding women's sports, explained as follows:

Ayatollah Musavi-Shobeyri-Zanjani said: "Avoiding these instances is undoubtedly a path to salvation." This is perhaps the first time in human history that a religious leader has regarded not exercising to be a path to human salvation.

Ayatollah Behjat: It is not allowed for women to exercise openly and before the eyes of men, and television broadcasts that cause sexual excitement or corruption are prohibited.

Ayatollah Sheykh Javad Tabrizi: Exercising is no problem for women per se, but observing modesty in public places is necessary, and the broadcast of programs that include prohibited acts or cause corruption is not permissible.

Ayatollah Makarem-Shirazi has opined that if women's exercises are not in public, there is no problem.

In the opinion of Ayatollah Safi-Golpayegani: "The implementation of such programs in public places is contrary to modesty, honor, and sports instructions. Moreover, showing women's bodies to men spreads prostitution, prohibited acts, and great corruption; showing such programs and encouraging them is prohibited."

Ayatollah Mazaheri, the head of the Esfahan Seminary, also responded to the question regarding women's bicycling and showing it on TV: Because of their nature and also because of their effects and consequences, such actions are contrary to religious law and are prohibited. Regarding showing women's sports on television, he stated: If the scenes are provocative or corrupting, of course they are prohibited. If they are not provocative and corrupting but are contrary to the purity of the sacred regime of the Islamic Republic, they are also prohibited.

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Iran: Structure of 'al-Quds Forces' Detailed

JN0106082196 Amman AL-HADATH in Arabic 27 May 96 p 9

[Report by Jihad al-Rantisi]

[FBIS Translated Text] Since its inception in 1990, questions have been raised about the Iranian al-Quds Forces. Even top Iranian officials know nothing about the forces beyond the name of their leader, Ahmad Wahidi. Why all the secrecy?

After painstaking research into reports collected and checked for authenticity over an extended period of time, AL-HADATH has come up with what resembles an answer to this question, which has often nagged diplomats and security services in more than one part of the world and continues to bedevil regional capitals constantly haunted by the specter of terror. Indeed, the terror has already struck and has dented security in some of these capitals.

The reports indicate that al-Quds Forces — which include some of the more experienced and seasoned leaders of the "Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps [IRGC]" — are the most effective and professional corps of these guards.

Al-Quds Forces have been charged with masterminding, planning, and executing foreign operations of the "Islamic Revolutionary Guards." In addition, all activities related to the export of the Islamic revolution have fallen to al-Quds Forces.

Al-Quds Forces, considered by Iranian Government circles to be the nucleus of an Islamic army, were formed in the 1980's and are viewed as part of the Iranian regime's experiment in governance and its efforts to export the revolution.

The policy of exporting the revolution, which topped the agenda of the Iranian regime when it seized power, has gone through various stages. This policy was focused by collecting the forces originally intended to mount foreign operations into a single body — the Guards of the Islamic Revolution's "al-Quds Forces". Prime assets and the cream of the military personnel were made accessible to these forces so they could pursue operations under the supervision of 'Ali Khamene'i, one of the more prominent political fronts of the Iranian regime.

The reports trace the beginnings as far back as 1979, the year that saw the founding of the Liberation Movements Bureau to oversee the effort to attract pro-Khomeyni extremists in various Islamic nations. The objective was to establish Islamic republics in Iraq and Arabian Gulf states. However, the coup d'etat-style policies favored and pursued by Iran at the time proved a dismal failure, as evidenced in Bahrian — where Mullah Modarresi, chief of the Islamic Liberation Movement there, was expelled from the country — and in Kuwait, which threw out Mullah Mahri. Against the backdrop of these failures, Mir Hoseyn Musavi, onetime prime minister in the 1980's, said in an interview with the newspaper KEYHAN that during the early days of the revolution, "the export and rapid spread of the revolution in the region was on our agenda. Our assessment seems to have been off the mark, and we have been proved wrong." This mistake was sufficient for President Rafsanjani, supreme commander of the armed forces during the 1980's, to undertake a fundamental reshuffle of the agencies charged with exporting the revolution. The shakeups were two-pronged:

First, various bodies, including the Liberation Movements Bureau, which was attached to the Revolutionary Guards, were merged, and superfluous adjuncts were scrapped to consolidate units. Second, augmenting and strengthening the basic agencies tasked with exporting the revolution to enhance their performance and minimize the odds of their being targeted by a potential political crackdown.

This is why the guards' intelligence agency assumed an increasingly high profile and the Lebanon Corps, the Ansar Headquarters responsible for the affairs of Iraq, and the Ansar Headquarters responsible for the affairs of Afghanistan and Pakistan were created. Simultaneously, there was a diminution in the roles of the Martyr Institution and the Islamic Information Organization, which had enjoyed a measure of independence.

Then the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Information [al-mukhabarat], and Culture and Islamic Guidance were assigned a principal role in exporting the revolution.

"Foreign Policy Principles of the Islamic Republic of Iran," a book published in 1987, outlines the tasks Iranian diplomats are supposed to undertake. It also emphasizes "the wide-ranging goals of the Islamic Republic to export the revolution and promote liberation movements and social strata and even individuals. It calls on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to guide and carry out the necessary coordination among various agencies in the sphere of foreign policy."

The reports emphasize that Iranian embassies supervise the political, propaganda, and military action undertaken by the agencies, except in cases where an exemption is made by President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani. More specifically, embassies take on various roles. While Iranian embassies in Europe gather intelligence on Europe-based Iranian oppositionists, Iranian

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embassies in Islamic nations establish contact with Islamists there and, if possible, steer and organize them and then send them to receive military instruction in Tehran. Algeria, Lebanon, Tunisia, and Turkey are mentioned as examples.

Tehran is convinced that the nations where Iran does not maintain embassies are farthest from the winds of "the Islamic revolution". A secret report submitted by an Iranian diplomatic team that visited Jordan months before the opening of the Iranian Embassy in Amman urged that "we must move quickly to open an embassy and be active there to make up for our 10-year absence from the Jordanian arena."

There are two departments in the Iranian Foreign Ministry — "the Third and Fourth" — that are active in exporting the revolution to Arab and African capitals. Mullah Khowansari is in charged of these two departments. He is assisted by a team that includes Mahmud Hashemi, President Rafsanjani's youngest brother, who handles the affairs of Jordan and the Muslim Brotherhood, and Mohammadi, who has responsibility for Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Libya, and Sudan.

A few months ago, separate departments were established to address the affairs of the Islamic republics that broke away from the former Soviet Union. Tehran has now doubled its efforts to export "the Islamic revolution" to these republics.

While the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance is responsible for finding the right fronts, like cultural centers and libraries, foreign-based murder squads and special intelligence teams located around the world liaise with the newly instituted Ministry of Information.

Unlike the forces of the IRGC, al-Quds Forces are led by a politically oriented command, called the Command for the Export of Revolution. This command concerns itself with the specifics of exporting extremism and terrorism to different countries. It undertakes a debate and analysis of the plans drawn up for the target countries and has the following branches:

1. The Iraq Directorate
2. The Lebanon, Palestine, and Jordan Directorate
3. The Turkey Directorate
4. The Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the Indian Subcontinent Directorate
5. The Western Nations Directorate: "Europe and America"
6. The North Africa Directorate: "Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Sudan, Morocco"
7. The Arabian Peninsula Directorate
8. The Republics of the Former Soviet Union Directorate

According to a secret report made available to AL-HADATH, this command was set up to remedy the shortcomings in the policy of exporting the Islamic revolution. Despite the military operations the rulers of Iran have managed to undertake, they have discovered that they lack a definite political "structure" to maximize their assets. In this context, these branches must bear the responsibility for setting up the widest possible network of contacts in their respective areas.

Iran's al-Quds Forces have various command centers with training camps that house local and other forces. Among the most important educational centers are Imam 'Ali University, Martyr Kazemi Camp, Beheshti Camp, and Waliy-al-'Asr Camp.

The information made available to AL-HADATH indicates the existence of special operations units housed in secret shelters around Tehran. The members of these units are so discreet and disciplined that if they fall in enemy hands, it will be virtually impossible for their captors to force any information out of them about their fellow activists.

The missions carried out by al-Quds Forces legions vary according to the nature of the arenas in which they operate. While the 2d "Lebanon" Legion provides manpower support for the local pro-Iran groups in Lebanon, the 3d "Hamzah" Legion has murdered a foreign diplomat in Ankara. The 4th "Ansar" Legion concerns itself with exporting revolution to the independent republics of the former Soviet Union, now that it has ceased training Afghan Shiites to carry out subversive acts in Pakistan.

Perhaps the most dangerous missions are the ones charged to the 6th Legion, which is responsible for North Africa. Its members are picked from the ranks of extremist forces in target nations by embassies and cultural centers, as well as by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. They are sent to Tehran to be "programmed" politically and ideologically and given military training to mount attacks. Among other tasks, they are responsible for forming resistance units and carrying out operations. These forces are known by the number "780."

The 5th Legion is responsible for "Europe and America." It differs from the others; while it is smaller in numbers, it is the most effective in terms of assassinations and explosions. Its members are based in safe houses in Tehran and in foreign countries.

This legion includes non-Iranians and is composed of the forces of the Malik al-Ashtar team, which sent execution squads to Britain, Japan, Italy, Switzerland, and Germany and was responsible for the murder of the

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translators of "The Satanic Verses" in Japan and Italy, as well as the assassination of Bakhtiar.

The chief of the guards, "Shams," assisted by "Arouj," oversees the education of the extremists at Imam 'Ali University, north of Sa'd Iyad Palace, formerly the headquarters of the Royal Guards Brigade. Enrolled at this university are "mercenaries," mostly non-Iranians, who attend classes in politics and ideology and receive instruction in sabotage, the manufacture of explosives, drive-by shooting, ambushes, shadowing and tailing, surveillance, and cold steel combat. Some Kuwaitis who completed their training in June 1991 were among this university's graduates. In addition to Imam 'Ali University, there is Bayt al-Maqdis University, which is known as the Peoples' School, where ideological sciences are taught separately from scientific seminaries. The course at the Peoples' School is six months long.

Al-Quds Forces command groups the most seasoned and experienced leaders of the Revolutionary Guards, especially those who have supervised operations outside the country, like the corps' commander, Hoseyn Mosleh, who was once commander of the revolutionary guards of Lebanon.

Another prominent figure in al-Quds Forces is Mohammad Ja'fari, assistant for intelligence affairs. The position of assistant for educational affairs is held by Shams and 'Arouj, commander of Imam 'Ali Camp, who once led the special forces and was responsible for Khamene'i's protection.

Menshawi is responsible for al-Quds Forces' office. Before that, he was commander of the IRGC affiliates operating abroad.

According to the reports made available to AL-HADA'TH, more secrets remain to be disclosed, and the months ahead will see many surprises that will underscore the importance of al-Quds Forces. Mohsen Reza'i, the IRGC's commander in chief, has described these forces as "the International Islamic Army that eliminates the excuse of intervention in disputes among Islamic states."

Iran: Conversation With GARDUN's Ma'rufi

96LA0239I London KEYHAN in Persian 16 May 96 p 12

[Article by M. Khoshnam; all ellipses, quotation marks, and parenthetical question marks as published]

[FBIS Translated Text] 'Abbas Ma'rufi in a Public Conversation: My Sin Is That I Am a Writer

The report was astonishing, but accepting it was inevitable.

"'Abbas Ma'rufi," the young Iranian writer and manager of GARDUN magazine, who has caused some commotion in Iran recently and whom the court has sentenced to jail, lashes, and a ban on writing for "spreading corruption and prostitution," upon the complaint of the story-telling managers of KEYHAN and SOBH, has come to Germany.

The newsletter was signed by the director of the Persian Division of Radio Germany, Peter Phillips, who said that he had arranged a conversation with 'Abbas Ma'rufi one evening so that anyone who wanted to ask him about his work and his difficult life could do so and also promised that the translation of the well-known novel by Ma'rufi, *The Symphony of the Dead*, would be published in Germany this year.

This report made us writers residing in Germany "very happy" and at the same time very "curious." We were happy that we would see a well-known writer who put his foot on the tail of the Islamic Republic here and there and accepted danger with his life and have a chat with him, and we were "curious" about the unclear issue of how he was able to leave the hell of the clerics after being convicted in court, without an exit permit, without a visa, and without help and support, as if Ayatollah Jannati, the Ansar-e Hezbollah, and the ferocious managers of KEYHAN and SOBH were sleeping.

We donned our hats and scarves and everything and went to the small hall of Radio Germany, the place to meet Ma'rufi. Writer friends and poets from the "left" and the "right" had come. We saw that everyone was happy and curious. They were whispering many guesses in each other's ears. They had many questions and were hopeful to have the opportunity to ask all of them.

Before starting the conversation, we saw Ma'rufi and introduced ourselves. We did not know each other "personally." When we were writers at one time at KEYHAN, he had just entered high school. Despite all the kindness, he did not accept our first request for an exclusive interview because he intends to go back to Iran (of course, not in the foreseeable future), and London KEYHAN is considered a supporter of the "Tyrant" in Tehran. The question was left on the tips of our tongues as to how he "opened his heart" to the BBC, Radio Israel, Voice of America, etc., but could not sit at a table with KEYHAN. Perhaps from such things the degree of hostility of the clerics can be understood. In any case..., we agreed to report on that public conversation, and this is the report.

"Peter Phillips" opened the meeting and said: Arrangements have been made to answer all questions, and if there are problems in translating what is said, they can

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be corrected. He also pointed out that he became acquainted during a recent visit to Iran and asked him to come to Germany for a few talks and discussions. After the program, the reading of four parts of the four "movements" of *The Symphony of the Dead* and its "eloquent" translation into German (I do not know who has done it — perhaps the same publisher that is preparing the German version of the book) continued. As a result of the "readings" in two languages, the conversations that we were anxiously awaiting were postponed until after a break.

In introducing himself, Ma'rufi said that he is 39 years old, was born in Tehran, and after elementary school studied dramatic arts at the Fine Arts College.

His first writing at the age of 20 and his first novel, *The Symphony of the Dead*, was published in 1367 [21 March 1988-20 March 1989]. Three novels, three plays, and several articles comprise his works. In 1369 [21 March 1990-20 March 1991], he received the permit to publish GARDUN, and exactly 10 months after it started, the first attack of the "Hezbollahis" on the office of the magazine occurred. GARDUN resumed publication after a year and a half of being banned for no reason, and after its manager was acquitted in a trial for no reason until now, after the publication of 52 issues, upon complaints of the insulting newspapers of the pressure group, its license was revoked forever and its manager was sentenced to jail, lashes, and a ban on writing in a court whose judge, according to him, was also the interrogator before the trial.

Ma'rufi has also founded a prize, the GARDUN Prize, which has been given for three years to the best literary works in various areas. The pressure group did not regard even this action permissible and created obstacles in the efforts to hold the related gatherings. Ma'rufi proudly mentions the reestablishment of the "Writers Association," which was initiated by GARDUN, and says: Despite all the prohibitions, still the members of the association meet privately once every two weeks and keep the association alive.

The summary of the first question, which as usual in our gathering of Iranians is coupled with "explanations and interpretations," is: You should not have had any apparent problems with the publication of your novels because so far they have been published in good numbers and without significant hardship. The problem must be with GARDUN. Have there also been others who have been banned from writing, like you, and been sentenced to prison and lashes or have been forced to leave their country?

I do not know why, but this question caught Ma'rufi's attention. He asked watchfully and under his breath: Could you state which newspaper or...you represent? After a little pause, he finally said:

"In 1370 [21 March 1991-20 March 1992], I published a book called *The Scent of Jasmine*, which was immediately banned and has not been given a permit for publication yet. In addition, *The Symphony of the Dead*, which, according to the Ministry of Islamic Culture and Guidance won the first prize, requires new permits for republication.... The publication of the fifth printing has been awaiting a permit for a long time. *The Year of the Riot* has not been given a permit for its third printing for the past year. In answer to you, I say that many writers face similar problems."

There are writers who have not been given permission to publish their work at all. The person asking the question was not convinced and repeated the second part of his question:

Every person has a method in his life. I have said frequently that I live in "time," and "place" is of "secondary importance" to me. I think that it is my "civil right" to be away from my home for a while and finish a new work.

The next person asking a question was German. He asked the tangible and "concrete reason" for the prohibition of Ma'rufi's work. The response was: The reason for the accusation, and in fact conviction, as I have said in the court, is that I am a "writer." I have been put on trial for writing, not for embezzlement or murder. The pressure groups do not bother with the writers themselves. They fight against "imagination" and thought.

The specific instances of the conviction were the publication of three editorials, a poem by Simin Behbahani, another poem by Fereshteh Sari, and such literary and lyrical prizes. For instance, the title of Sari's poem was "The Republic of Winter," which did not please the pressure groups. There was also an article by "Hushang Golshiri" on "Freedom of Expression" and an article by Mohsen Sazgara about "Art and the Obligation of the Artist," with the conclusion that the artist is not obliged to anything except his own art. Then there was a short story by a young self-sacrificing combatant which they say insults the "self-sacrificers."

These are the reasons for my conviction.

Ma'rufi, intentionally or by mistake, made no mention of the famous article by Baqer Parhan, the article which compares the regime of the clerics with the previous regime and angered the clerics.

The next question was, as it should have been, the one that was heard in the whispers before the beginning of the talk: "It is said that you are a religious person and

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have been and are now even affiliated with religious groups.... What is your political ideology and world view? Of course, if you wish to respond to this question, are these statements about you true?"

Here too, Ma'rufi wanted to know from which newspaper the person asking the question had come, as if "newspapers" frighten our journalist. He then said:

"I have responded to such questions in Iran frequently. The reasons for my 'rebellion' in GARDUN were, in fact, a response to such questions. In any case, I will repeat the answer for you. I believe in God. I have a religion and a prayer room for myself. I have a private life that I would not exchange for anything. Regarding what you said, if you have any evidence, please show it. I am not a member of any group...I have only been a member of the Iranian Writers Association."

In response to the question of whether he would go back to Iran despite all the hardships or stay in Germany, like many others, Ma'rufi said decisively that he would go back and added:

The reason for my "coming abroad" is that in Iran writers and writing are insulted. I was psychologically totally confused. My life and my professional life were in danger, and since I could not continue working, I left Iran."

Another German asked about the reaction of the intellectual community in Iran toward world literature: Are Western writers known in Iran and do their works get published?

Ma'rufi's response was in the affirmative. He said: Thirty percent of our own magazine was allocated to international writers. Then he mentioned a few writers as examples, such as Philip Ross, Marquez, Graham Greene, Heinrich Boll, and Alberto Moravia.

The next question stemmed from a sense of curiosity coupled with skepticism: "How is it that, despite a conviction in court, you were able to leave the country? Are there other writers who have been accused or convicted, like you, but whose case has not been raised on the international level and have not been able to escape danger?" Ma'rufi said:

"The court granted me the right of appeal and I have made use of it. Hence, my conviction is not final yet, and I can come and go. The final verdict will be issued in the appeals court. Of course, the experience of prison could be 'beneficial' to me. I have announced on the BBC as well that I do not want them to remove the lashes from my sentence. I would like to be given lashes. I am even prepared to pay money for it. The main issue is the insult that is done to a 'writer.' In a country whose religious book states, 'I swear on the pen and all it writes,' such insults are very 'sad.' In any case, Mr. Morris Capiturn [as transliterated], the UN representative and also the official representative of the Human Rights Commission, came to the office of GARDUN, and when I raised the 'issue,' they 'advised' me that I should go away from Iran for a while."

The next person asking a question was a German woman. She appeared to be quite informed about issues in Iran and put her finger on the most thought-provoking cultural "incident" which occurred last year: the writing and issuance of the statement know as "We Are Writers," signed by most Iranian poets and writers (132 people), and then the sad withdrawal of some of them and their signatures. She wanted to know the reason for such a "withdrawal." Were there bans and hardships threatening them?

Ma'rufi said: "In fact, I was a member of the eight-member committee that prepared this statement and also gathered the signatures. The story of the statement had many ups and downs. In the last moments, as we were gathering the signatures, a group of friends engaged in a non-democratic action. In any case, the number of signatures was not completed (?). "One signature" (?) was censored, and finally in the next stages and under the pressures that were imposed (I do not know what kind of pressures), they withdrew their signatures. They were about 15 people."

The same person had another question: "What is the relationship between Iranian writers and writers in other parts of the world, and how do they want it to be? We know little about writers inside Iran, and there have always been differences of opinion regarding the Iranian publishers at the 'Frankfurt Book Exhibition.' What is your opinion?"

Ma'rufi found the opportunity appropriate to complain about the lack of sufficient attention by Western writers to the conditions of their Iranian colleagues. He said:

"I think the best way is direct relationship with the Iranian writers 'themselves.' The Western press and writers must pay more attention to a country with a rich culture of several thousand years. They should evaluate the problems of our writers and rise up in their support..."

The next question again concerned the "Writers Association," which is reported on widely: While the second Writers Association played an important role in bringing about the revolution, why is the present "association" so inactive against dictatorship and strangulation?

The response was that the members of the association are the same old members. But he considered the

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association a guild and a non-political institution. A writer from the audience opines that the association has always been a guild and has asked for freedom of expression and the press. But governments have made it appear political.

Another writer had the "last word": In a society that is trampled under the feet of autocrats, the essence of speaking and writing and all that is the right of a civil human being become political. The pursuit of freedom, no matter in what form, is a political act.

In the meantime, an Iranian woman who seemed very excited made a statement that, for no logical reason, is what many like to hear. The gist of what she said is that no one should leave Iran (probably except for herself); we should stay and fight in that climate because abroad, nothing can be done, and so forth.

The situation of 'Abbas Ma'rufi is not clear. Even if he knows it himself, we do not. There are contradictions in his statements. He says that he will go back, but there are "indications" that he will stay, at least for an unlimited period. Meeting and talking with him was beneficial, enlightening, and "necessary" for us and still is. We should "capture" him somewhere else with ease of mind and try to find out what that story is all about.

We want to say that the final, necessary word was with Peter Phillips, the director of the Persian Division of Radio Germany. We praise his "initiative" and request that he "continue" this initiative. Not only in the country but outside Iran we have distinguished writers and poets who do not have the possibility and opportunity to show themselves, read their poems and stories, and become acquainted with German writers and also with the curious and interested "public" in the Iranian culture. By continuing such gatherings, Radio Germany can create a significant movement in the cultural community of Iran in Germany and even abroad.

Iran: IRNA Signs Cooperation Agreement With Nigerian Agency

LD0106180896 Tehran IRNA in English 1739 GMT 1 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Lagos, Nigeria, June 1, IRNA — Managing- Directors of the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) and the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reached an agreement here on Saturday on professional cooperation.

According to the agreement, the two agencies will exchange news and photographs and share experience in the management and technical areas.

IRNA and NAN will cooperate in the framework of the Non-Aligned Movement News Agencies Pool (NANAP).

IRNA is a member of the Organization of the Asia-Pacific News Agencies (OANA) while NAN is a member of the Pan-African News Agency (PANA).

The two news agencies will also set up offices in either country.

The agreement was signed by IRNA chief Fereydun Verdinejad and the head of NAN, Wadamaeda.

Iran: Jewish Community Remembers Anniversary of Khomeyni's Death

LD0206090296 Tehran IRNA in English 0723 GMT 2 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, June 2, IRNA — On the eve of the seventh anniversary of Imam Khomeyni's demise, the Iranian Jewish community issued a statement Sunday [2 June] offering its condolences to the supreme leader of the Islamic revolution, Ayatollah Khamane'i, to the country's officials and the Iranian nation.

Imam Khomeyni's glorious path leads the Iranian nation to success and prosperity. Iranian Jews, along with their other countrymen, will follow his honorable path, added the statement.

Iran: Ansar-e Hezbollah Attacks Theaters

96LA0239H London KEYHAN in Persian 16 May 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] The riffraff of Ansar-e Hezbollah attacked a number of Tehran cinemas last week and beat a group of officials of these cinemas and their audiences.

According to reports by news agencies, a pregnant woman who was savagely attacked in the course of the raid of the Hezbollah on Qods Cinema lost her baby. The pretext of the Hezbollah's attack was apparently the showing of a film in which a man appears in women's clothing.

One day after this event and following the protest of the people to law enforcement and regime officials, the Ministry of Islamic Culture and Guidance condemned this attack in an announcement apologizing to those injured in the attacks on Qods and several other cinemas. The ministry regarded this action of the Hezbollah as irresponsible and hasty and a stain on the reputation of the Islamic Republic regime and the dignity of the noble people of Iran.

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Engineer Zarghami, the deputy for cinemas of the Ministry of Islamic Culture and Guida[illegible]lso told Tehran KEYHAN that this action was not done by the Hezbollah. While referring to the statement of Ansar-e Hezbollah, he said: In the gathering of Ansar-e Hezbollah last Sunday, Ansar-e Hezbollah members warned those who did not observe Islamic standards in the Qods Cinema and prevented the entry of the audience to the cinema. This was protested by theater officials and resulted in a fight between the Ansar-e Hezbollah and the officials of the theater. As a result of this attack, the windows of the cinema were broken and other damage was done. At the same time, SALAM newspaper referred to the attack by Ansar-e Hezbollah on the cinemas and assemblies and pointed out that since currently no one can prevent such actions by the Hezbollah, people should not go to the movies or they should be ready to defend their lives.

The Ansar-e Hezbollah also disrupted and prevented the speech of Dr. Sorush at the Amir Kabir University. The Ansar-e Hezbollah gathered in front of the Amir Kabir (Tehran Polytechnic) University several hours before the speech by Dr. Sorush and announced that Sorush must not enter the university.

According to Tehran KEYHAN, a number of Hezbollah members were arrested in this incident. RESALAT published the statement of Ansar-e Hezbollah strongly criticizing the Islamic Society of Amir Kabir University for having invited Sorush to speak at that university.

Iran: Nine Bank Tejarat Officials Arrested

96LA0239A London KEYHAN in Persian 2 May 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Nine officials of the Kashan Tejarat Bank branches who, along with the deputy directors of these banks and five managers of the production companies, have misused and embezzled bank funds, were arrested. PAYAM, published in Tehran, writes that the officials of the Tejarat Banks of Kashan has received 1 billion rials [R] in cash, 59 carpets, and a number of company shares as bribes to place R50 billion in credit at the disposal of certain companies.

SOBH also wrote that the former director of Tejarat Bank of Central Province and the director of the Tejarat Bank of Kashan region were the main perpetrators of this embezzlement.

Iran: Veterans Foundation Officials Arrested

96LA0224E Tehran PAYAM-E DANESHJU in Persian 5 Mar 96 p 2

[FBIS Translated Text] Following massive embezzlement and abuse, several officials from the Housing Division of the Foundation for the Oppressed and Wounded War Veterans were arrested. Although the ones arrested are connected with the enormous Sa'idiyeh Project, it is said that the financial violations are also connected to development projects in the foundation's other divisions. We hope to give further details in the next issue.

Note: It is most unfortunate that these kinds of malfunctions are taking place in a foundation named for the oppressed and wounded war veterans.

Iran: Open University Students Allowed To Form Political Bodies

LD3105221796 Tehran SALAM in Persian 26 May 96 p 2

[Unattributed report: "Students of the Free Islamic University Are Allowed To Form Independent Political Bodies"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The official in charge of the office of the Vali-ye Faqih [the supreme jurisconsult] in the Free Islamic University of Astara city [Mohammad Morad Bayat], said yesterday: Students at various faculties of the Free University throughout Iran will be able to form independent political, cultural and guild establishments if they so wish.

Mohammad Morad Bayat added: The guidelines for the formation of student bodies have been conveyed to the Free University According to the official the licence for the activity of student political groups will be issued on a temporary basis to start with and a permanent licence will be granted when the undertakings given in the articles of association are carried out.

Iran: Students React to Academic's Letter to President

LD3105235596 Tehran SOBH in Persian 26 May 96 p 4

[Report from the SOBH news desk: "The Reaction of the Students of the Amir Kabir and Medical Sciences Universities to Sorush's Open Letter"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Following Dr. 'Abdolkarim Sorush's open letter to President Hashemi-Rafsanjani, the student basij organ of the Amir Kabir and the Medical Sciences Universities in Tehran have also sent an open letter to President Hashemi-Rafsanjani in response to Sorush's letter.

Here are parts of that letter.

Mr. President: We appeal to you about the double injustice that has been done to the community of Muslim university students and academics at this juncture in the history of the heroic and martyr-nurturing nation of Iran.

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First, Mr. Sorush, through his deviant and illogical ideas, has led the community of young university people from the terra firma of certainty to the whirlpool of doubt and confusion. He dismisses any criticism of his brain-waves (!) made by thinking individuals, by equating it with witch-hunting, and evades response by any means. Second, he considers himself to be the representative and spokesman of the university population, and unjustly takes it upon himself to speak for this huge community.

How can a person who, in theory and practice, believes in negating the sovereignty of religion in the state political and management arenas, describes the return to basics by religion as medieval and, in his hypocritical support of liberalist ideas and in propagating the principles of secularism, has left his stablemate behind, not expect to provoke the huge mass of those who have suffered hardships for the revolution?

In recent years he has had more opportunity than most to propagate his secularist ideas. Even in recent months, when he claims to have kept silent and to have shown patience (!), he has had every facility at his disposal, including the press, his university chair, foreign travel, and interviews. Nevertheless, by bringing up his open letter to your excellency, he has tried to feign innocence and mar all the success of the ruling system in the past and in various arenas, particularly in the cultural and social fields.

He has eroded the patience of the children of the revolution by his disingenuousness and lack of frankness, and by his artful rudeness which is presented in his guise as a religious reformer.

Mr President: His beliefs and ideas can be evaluated from three standpoints. He either engages in lecturing and debate from his university seat or he is a social reformer, or he is paving the ground for his political objectives for toppling religious sovereignty under the guise of scientific discourse.

Unstinting support by foreign media and by the anti-revolutionary magazines and press inside and outside the country indicates that the third version is the dominant of his ideas. Global arrogance and Zionism have reached the conclusion that if they want to attack the foundations of the Islamic ruling system they can find no sharper a weapon than his ideas; ideas whose falseness have been proven time and time again in the history of the Muslim nation of Iran.

He is the only expert on Islam who can answer the complicated questions raised by the sworn enemies of the revolution about their own problems. In this respect he takes part in secret sessions with the political-security leaders of alien countries.

To put it more clearly, the lackeys of global arrogance recall him as a pawn who in practice will shake the very foundations of the ruling Islamic system. It is not for nothing that the refugee grouplets have pinned their hopes on him and are counting the days until the realization of his ominous agenda.

Sorush's guidelines regarding the sovereignty of religion are the same ones with which the global plunderers used to delude the oppressed of the world for years. But he is injecting those words under new interpretations and thus feeds a lethal poison as if it were an elixir to our arrogance-crushing revolution.

By creating a base for supporting the leadership of his political, secular party under the guise of lectures and debate, he sometimes promotes libertarianism and negates all that is sacred. At times he sings of the separation of religion and politics. Undoubtedly that is why those with little education are attracted to him and they will be seriously damaged.

We read in another part of the open letter that: We are apprehensive that now that the world is full of his claims of Abrahamite endeavor and visions of fires turning into gardens, soon there will be even bigger claims by him. [passage omitted]

At the end of this painful letter we strongly stress that he has no relationship with the Muslim university population. He is neither the spokesman for that stratum nor has he any affiliation with it, nor is he accepted by it. It is certain that in his view a university where the birth of knowledge and the death of barbarism are celebrated is one which is aligned with the objectives of global arrogance. The victory of the evil-minded ones who are dependent on imperialism will be the crystallization of the defeat of the independence of our culture and the ending of our hope, the waning of our ethics and ideas.

Nepal & Bhutan

Nepal: Opposition to River Treaty With India Noted

BK3105103296 Kathmandu THE KATHMANDU POST in English 31 May 96

[Report by Ram Limbu — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kathmandu, May 30 — There are signs that the all-party consensus on the Mahakali Integrated Development Treaty reached four months ago is tottering.

The treaty, initialled in Kathmandu amid much fanfare during the January visit of then Indian external affairs

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minister Pranab Mukherjee, was condemned by the activists from various parties as being detrimental to the national interests.

They have urged the parliament not to ratify it. The activists — leftists, centrists and rightists — based their criticism to the "landmark treaty" on the premise that the Mahakali river belongs "exclusively" to Nepal.

Member of Mahakali Treaty Resistance Movement Malla K. Sundar, an UML [United Marxist-Leninist] activist, told a press conference today that the treaty infringes on the sovereignty of Nepal as it "wrongly" defines the Mahakali river as a boundary river.

This announcement comes in the wake of a stinging remark on the treaty made by the UML president Manmohan Adhikari last week. Adhikari has threatened to withdraw UML's support for the treaty, stating the Mahakali package includes the "whole of the Pancheswor in the name of the Mahakali treaty."

The Integrated Mahakali Development Treaty is yet to be ratified by the joint House of Parliament. As the treaty ratification requires two-thirds majority, UML support remains crucial.

Flaying the treaty as damaging to the nation, Sundar said, "Existing historical documents conclusively prove that the Mahakali river exclusively belongs to Nepal."

The 1816 Sugauli Treaty and the 1860 Naya Muluk Treaty explicitly mention the entire Mahakali river as belonging to Nepal, Sundar claimed. Article 5 of the Sugauli Treaty says: "The Raja of Nepal renounces himself, her heirs and successors all claims to or connections with the countries lying west of the river Kali (Mahakali)..." Likewise, the article 2 of the Naya Muluk Treaty says the "British government hereby bestows on... Nepal... the lowlands between the rivers Kali (Mahakali) and Raptee..." Article 3 of the same treaty says the boundary line extending eastward from the river Kali shall be the boundary between the British India and Nepal. More importantly, the map prepared in accordance with the Naya Muluk treaty shows Mahakali river "well inside" the Nepalese territory, Sundar said.

In the light of these historical evidences, the Mahakali Treaty, which says the Mahakali river is a boundary river on "major stretches" between the two countries, encroaches on the territorial integrity of Nepal, he added.

Sundar also offered other factors that "necessitate" the scrapping of the treaty. Anti-Mahakali activists say the provisions in the treaty force Nepal to sell power to India at a throw-away price.

Earlier today, the Resistance Movement submitted a memorandum to Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, demanding the scrapping of the treaty that was signed at the prime ministerial level during his India visit in February.

Nepal: Prime Minister Discusses Environmental Issues

BK0306025196 Kathmandu THE KATHMANDU POST in English 1 Jun 96

[Report by a "POST reporter" — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kathmandu, May 31 — Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has said, with the emerging new technologies developing all over the world, its repercussions should be observed carefully to wipe out problems that may arise in the future. He said this while inaugurating a 2 day national seminar on "Quality of Petroleum Products and pollution control" today.

Deuba requested the people not to establish industries in the cities and nearby rivers which will create pollution. By this increasing trend, the earth's ozone layer is also getting depleted day by day.

"Fumes which come out in different ways have gradually made city lives worse. Only one or two institutions cannot solve the existing pollution and urbanization problems."

Speaking on the same occasion, Executive Director of Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC) Madan Raj Sharma said that demand of petroleum products is on the rise by 12 to 13 percent annually. Total demand for diesel per year is 2,80,000 kilo litre, kerosene 2,2,000 kilo litre, petrol 40,000 kilo litre, aeroplane fuel 42,000 kilo litre, industrial fuel 30,000 kilo litre and cooking gas 18,000 tonnes, Sharma disclosed. Due to increase in the price of petroleum products in international market and rise in the American dollar against Nepali currency, we were compelled to increase the price of petroleum, Sharma said.

Even today developing countries all over the world consume petrol with lead residue but most developed countries have already started using lead free petrol. Some Indian states like Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras have already taken initiatives to use lead free petrol. In Nepal too, NOC has decided to use lead free petrol in the coming fiscal year after the petrol is examined against lead residues.

Secretary Shambhu Sharan of Supplies Ministry said the government alone cannot do everything, public's support is vital to move the country ahead in the development path. He said all people should change

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their attitudes first and start to do constructive work for making this country beautiful by cleaning all the nooks and corners of the cities, create awareness about the mismanagement of the urban areas and create a congenial atmosphere in developing the country's industries and for its sustenance. The two day seminar is organized by NOC and about 120 participants are taking part in the workshop.

Nepal: Prime Minister Urges Environmental Protection Efforts

OW0406044796 Beijing XINHUA in English 0359 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kathmandu, June 4 (XINHUA) — Nepali Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has called for efforts to protect the environment in the country which is facing worsening environmental problems.

Chairing the first meeting of the newly-formed Environment Preservation Council here on Monday [3 Jun], Deuba urged all non-governmental organizations working in the field to maintain better coordination with the government.

He stressed the urgency with which to control pollution in the country, adding that the Ministry for Population and Environment formed last year should monitor and evaluate the conservation work.

The prime minister also ordered the council to take necessary measures to cope with the growing urbanization in Nepal.

The government has decided to introduce strict emission standards for vehicles in the Kathmandu Valley, which is believed to be the worst polluted area in the country.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Prime Minister Sends Message to Indian Counterpart

BK0406034496 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 4 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has said Pakistan and India should resolve their differences with mutual respect and according to internationally established principles. In a message to Mr. Deve Gowda on his assumption of the office of Indian prime minister, she recalled that the two countries are heirs to many fine and magnificent civilizations. She stressed that the two countries should open a new chapter of their relations by laying down the foundations of a peaceful South Asia. She said this should be based on equitable conflict resolution and reconciliation.

The prime minister said: For the sake of our people and as civilized nations, let us sit across the table for a search for lasting peace. Ms. Benazir Bhutto said she have been encouraged by the reference in the Janata Dal manifesto that discussion with Pakistan will be held to resolve the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. She reiterated Pakistan's offer of talks aimed at settlement of the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir and other outstanding matters between the two countries. She said given mutual respect, there is no reason why we cannot resolve our differences.

Pakistan: Mirage Deal Allegedly Involves Kickbacks

BK0306144896 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 3 Jun 96 pp 1,11

[Article by Aroosa Alam]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ISLAMABAD, June 2: The hotch potchly and secretly concluded deal by PAF [Pakistan Air Force] to buy 40 second hand Mirage 111's from SAGEM of France at the cost of 120 million US dollars has not only raised some very pertinent mind-boggling questions about the transparency of the deal, it has also put the credibility and integrity of PAF bosses in serious question as reports from competent quarters suggest that at least 20 million US dollars of the deal are unaccountable by the contracting authorities and the deal has been wrapped up without making mandatory evaluations and adequate technical inspections of the aircraft.

"The down payment for the machines was made on the 4th of May 1996 through the National Bank of Pakistan despite the clear instructions from the highest quarters of the government to hold back the payment till the time a thorough and detailed review of the deal is done by some competent governmental sources.

The instructions to the Defense Procurement Division were conveyed through Ministry of Defense following a complaint made to the Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto during her visit to Sweden that at least 20 million US dollars have been received as kickbacks in the purchase. According to well-informed sources the DGDP [Director-General Defense Procurement], who has now been sent back to Pakistan Navy for his alleged involvement in the shady deal, instead of complying the Executive orders made payment to the French company on the orders of Chief of Air Staff. It has been reported that the DGDP in his explanation note has mentioned this fact that the payment was made on the order and the desire of Chief of Air Staff.

It may be mentioned that THE MUSLIM was the first one to break the news about PAF buying 40 old Mirages in its publication on July 14, 1995 and also reported that the two technical teams were being despatched to Spain

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and other countries to negotiate for old Mirages. THE MUSLIM also at that time cautioned the authorities that the French firm was a serious contender for this contract and would ask for price of its choice.

The PAF authorities not only kept the negotiations with French company in deep secret, it also dispatched dummy evaluation teams to various capitals for so-called negotiations. Not at any stage was the public or the media taken into confidence about the expenditure of tax payers' money. In fact the whole deal was tailor made from the very beginning in such a manner; that the allocated 120 million US dollars are fully consumed in one purchase. The PAF managed to have allocations of 120 million US dollars from the government during the DCC [Defense Committee of the Cabinet] meeting on 20th May 1994 out of PAF's total budget of 145 million US dollars for the year 1994-95. A summary by the Chief of Air Staff, who has the sole propriety rights to give clearance to any purchase without a full house discussions or evaluations, was submitted before the DCC on 20th May 1994 for the allocation of 120 million US dollars for the purchase of second hand Mirages to enhance the second line of defense of Pakistan Air Force. The summary said that Pakistan was negotiating with Spain, Belgium, Zaire, Lebanon and France for the old Mirages. The summary itself gave the estimated price of 1.5 million US dollars per copy plus the overhauling and upgrading cost which was not specified by the summary.

Strangely enough the PAF without concluding the deal had asked for 120 million US dollars as if they knew how much it was going to cost for the repairs and upgradation of the aircraft which were not even known to them leave alone the physical inspections. The Advisor V.A. Jaffery, however attempted to raise points about the allocations during the DCC but the bosses prevailed. It was however, decided that the PAF will submit a detailed and comprehensive report on its negotiations with different sources in three months time before the DCC or the competent authorities.

According to our sources, no such report was submitted to the government. Two Air-force teams were, however, dispatched to various countries to conduct the evaluations of old Mirages. The last team of PAF visited France in November to conduct the technical evaluations of Mirage 111s which were handed over to SAGEM by the French airforce sometime back. THE MUSLIM in its report on July 14, 1994 had advised the PAF to directly negotiate with the French air force for the purchase of 40 Mirage 111s to get a cheaper government-to-government deal rather than bargaining with a private firm who will ask price of its own. The PAF had six different offers for the supply of old Mirages which included offers from Spain (21 aircraft with overhauled), Belgium (40 aircraft all upgraded), Zaire (B aircraft), Lebanon 10 aircraft), South Africa (20 Cheetahs retrofitted Mirage 111s), and France (40 aircraft all needed overhauling and upgradation).

All the 40 Mirage 111s purchased by PAF from SAGEM were commissioned into French Service between 1965 to 1975 and all of them were put on reserve in 1993. Some of these aircraft are offered with old air frames and new engines and they are at the different stages of operational fitness.

Since all these aircraft are at the different life span stages, it is pertinent to note that the PAF has agreed to buy all these aircraft at the blanket price of a million US dollars per copy without determining the actual cost of repairs and upgradation. This fact has given credence to the allegations that about 20 million US dollars stand unaccounted for. The aviation experts alleged that under no circumstance it could be predetermined that what kind of repairs and upgradations would be required to a particular aircraft unless detailed and lengthy physical inspections are carried out by experts which could span over from 6 months to one year. In the instant case it has been reported by some competent sources that the two technical teams dispatched to France carried out only 10 days inspections of 40 aircraft. They maintained that this fact could be ascertained from the official record that the total stay of these teams was never more than two weeks in France. In fact the second team visited France to sort out at least three issues which included the procurement of Mistral missile, Mirage 2000-5 and second hand Mirages.

The sources said that the most pertinent question is that when PAF bought Mirages from Australia it took them at least one and half years to determine that what kind of repairs, upgradations and overhauling was required to these aircraft. It is surprising to note that in the case of French Mirages the PAF in short inspections was able to predetermine the nature and the cost of repairs, upgradations of the aircraft who are of different vintages and have different life span of its essential components including the flying hours of their engines.

The PAF in its summary submitted to DCC itself quoted the price of 1.5 million per copy. This means that the upgradation and overhauling is going to cost 1.5 million US dollars which is the actual cost of the whole aircraft. It is believed that only 20 aircraft will be sold to Pakistan with FIAR Radar. Rest of the aircraft will have normal overhauling and the upgradation. The package offered by the SAGEM include the airframe, engine overhauling and structural improvements. The sources alleged that the realistic estimate of the these repairs

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and upgradation if calculated at very liberal rates does not go beyond 100 million US dollars for the whole package. They argue if the price according to PAF's own summary per copy is 1.5 million US dollars and overhauling and very liberal upgradation could not go beyond additional one million, even then according to these experts 20 million are not accountable. According to these sources, Spain had offered to supply Mirage 111's at the cost of 1.2 million per copy with overhauled engines. And it is believed that these aircraft were with better flying life.

The sources said that it is beyond a sane comprehension that while the Government of Pakistan has spent millions of dollars to enhance the capabilities of Kamara Mirage rebuild factories to achieve the ISO 9000 standards, the PAF has given the contract of repairs, rebuilding and upgradation to SAGEM which is known world wide for its expertise in avionics integration and not for carrying out repairs and upgradations of old aircraft. The SAGEM over the years has been carrying out the integration of avionics of various kinds into one air system. That means, that they may fit EWS (early warning system) in a French aircraft while integrating weapons systems of Russian manufacture. But they are no authority to carry out extensive repairs, upgradations and other jobs on the old Mirages Pakistan has bought.

The PAF officials however, justify the contract for repairs and upgradation by maintaining that Kamara would have taken years to roll out these old machines while the SAGEM will give delivery of the first overhauled and upgraded batch in two months time. This will be followed by couple of aircraft every month. The SAGEM is no stranger to Pakistan or the PAF for that matter. It is assisting the PAF at Kamara to carry out the extensive upgradation of its Mirage 111s fleet which also includes those Mirages which were bought from Australia Navigation and fire control systems of the aircraft are being up graded while modifications are also being carried out in the entire electronic system including radar, and weapon delivery system. This amply demonstrates that the SAGEM is only qualified to do the integration of various avionics into one system and not to carry out engine overhaul and airframe upgradation.

While the Pakistan's ISO 9000 will sit idle, the junk and closed down industry of France will carry out the job for Pakistan air force. It is reported that Sogerma and AIA of France have already been subcontracted by the SAGEM to carry out-the jobs which it could not perform on Pakistani Mirages.

It is also apprehended by experts if the aircraft bought by the PAF will match the Indian threat of MiG-29s and Mirage 2000s as Mirage 111 is known to be a high altitude interceptor and not an attack fighter.

Pakistan: MQM Says Government Delaying Solution to Karachi Issue

BK0106132596 Islamabad THE NATION in English 31 May 96 p 16

[Report by Shamim Bano]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KARACHI — Ajmal Dehlvi the chief negotiator MQM [Muhajir Qaumi Movement] has accused the government that instead of resolving the disturbing issues it has adopted negative policies to further complicate the situation.

Referring to his meeting with Governor Sindh Kamaluddin Azfar he said the Governor had given assurance that problems of MQM will be solved but the only agenda during the talk was the seizure of hides and skins of sacrificial animals but that too was not solved.

While talking to THE NATION, he said when the minor issues are not solved by the Governor of Sindh how can he claim that "if we sit at negotiations table with the government it will discuss various issues with us and try to find a solution."

He was disappointed over the attitude of the Governor and added that under these circumstances the resumption of talks is not possible.

He said that Government is not sincere in settling the issues rather they are using delaying tactics.

On the contrary when a person from the government side was contacted he said Government is not ready to hold talks at gunpoint and it will not compromise on the politics of violence.

Nisar Ahmed Khuro, provincial Minister for Planning and Development said in the democratic world no Opposition ever shares power with the Government. They play their own role, he added. He said: "We are ready to hold dialogue with the MQM but the preconditions they have set are not acceptable. They should first sit at the negotiation table and then discuss the problems. If MQM is serious to hold talks it should surrender politics of guns," he emphasised.

Pakistan: Sindh Governor Holds Talks With Altaf Group Team

BK0306051296 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 3 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Issues relating to the restoration of peace in Karachi were discussed at a meeting in Karachi yesterday between the Sindh Governor, Mr.

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Kamal Azfar, and a three-member negotiating team of the Altaf Group headed by Mr. Ajmal Dehlvi. The team was invited by the governor, who said they held talks in order to resume dialogue between the two sides immediately and to make it successful. Mr. Ajmal Dehlvi told newsmen that each and every point pertaining to their negotiations was discussed thoroughly and the provincial governor was likely to visit Islamabad today to present their case in Islamabad before the arrival of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in Karachi. He described their meeting with the governor as positive and constructive and said they briefed him thoroughly about the causes of failure of previous rounds of talks with the government.

A high-level meeting held in Karachi yesterday reviewed the progress of implementation of the various projects undertaken in accordance with the Karachi development package. The meeting presided over by the provincial minister for planning and development, Mr. Nisar Ahmad Khoro, was informed about the monitoring system devised to ensure timely completion of development schemes. The meeting was informed that the city will get additional water supply and power in a few month's time and several schemes for improving road communications would be completed to facilitate road traffic.

According to police sources, one person was killed in terrorism-related incidents in Karachi yesterday. Four other persons were injured in different crimes in the city.

Pakistan: MQM, Sindh Governor Hold Negotiations

BK0406020596 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 3 Jun 96 pp 1,9

[Report by THE NEWS correspondent]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KARACHI: Head of the MQM [Muhajir Qaumi Movement] negotiating team Ajmal Dehlvi has reiterated that the party was ready for talks under certain conditions. Talks could only resume under conducive atmosphere," he said.

This he sated at a joint press conference held at the Governor's House Sunday [2 June] after the meeting with Sindh Governor Kamal Azfar. MPA Shoaib Bukhari and Sheikh Liaquat Hussain also attended the two-hour long meeting.

He said the Governor desires that prevailing peace and tense-free atmosphere be further improved and efforts be geared up in this regard.

Ajmal said MQM was ready for talks at an hour's notice. MQM was ready to hold talks for peace process but said our objections be included to the agenda. He said to restart talks MQM wants the government to take steps which indicate change in its attitude.

Sindh Governor speaking on the occasion said it was their goodwill gesture to come for talks. He said as the constitutional head of the province it was his duty to remain in contact with the concerned politicians.

Azfar describing the meeting as "talks about the talks", added that the MQM team has no objection to the government negotiating team headed by Prof ND Khan but they want the team to be enlarged.

The talks, he said, were "purely informal talks and we discussed Karachi problems, law and order and other important issues." Ajmal said in the talks held in 1994 agreements were reached but unfortunately they were not implemented. Similarly, last year talks again resumed with the Federal Government but implementation did not follow, thus talks resulted in a dead lock.

Regarding the government-MQM talks Ajmal said 15 conditions have been presented to the government which include enlargement of the government team by inducting some ministers; to include three observers in the talks; implementing machinery should be sitting with team so that they could ensure implementation.

He said these suggestions have also been presented to the Governor and he is going to Islamabad on Monday. [3 June] We are hopeful that he, not only being the constitutional head of the province but also a senior barrister, would plead our (MQM) case effectively.

Meanwhile, the MQM has given an assurance to the Deputy Speaker of the Sindh Assembly Sardar Nabil that they will attend the forthcoming PA Budget Session 1996-97.

On a request made by the MQM team regarding the MPAs living abroad for the fear of arrest Nabil Gabol gave an assurance that none of the MQM MPAs would be arrested or harassed if they come to Karachi for attending the budget Session.

Pakistan: Officials Deny Leghari, Bhutto Received Invitation to Kabul

BK0406020096 Islamabad THE NATION in English 3 Jun 96 pp 1,5

[Report by Fahd Husain]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ISLAMABAD -There are no chances of President Farooq Leghari or Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto visiting Kabul, says the Foreign Office.

Responding to an invitation to the two Pakistani leaders from Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani through a Press report, officials said they had received no formal

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invitation from Kabul and therefore the possibility of the President or the Prime Minister visiting Kabul did not arise. "The invitation should come through official channels," said an official.

An interview published here quoted Afghan President Rabbani as inviting President Farooq Leghari and Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto to Kabul. Rabbani had also offered to visit Pakistan in an effort to normalize relations between Kabul and Islamabad.

"Invitation for what?" responded another official. "What is there to talk about?" This reaction symbolizes the uneasy relationship that still exists between the two. Pakistan maintains that it will have nothing to do with Rabbani till he accepts Pakistan's demands for a public apology for the attack on the Pakistani embassy in Kabul and pay compensation for the damages. These demands had been conveyed to the Kabul delegation which had visited Pakistan last month.

According to officials here, the delegation had said it was willing in principle to pay compensation but it did not have the resources to do so. However, the delegation members had stated that they would convey Islamabad's position to Rabbani and then get back with an answer. The answer however is not forthcoming.

"The ball is in Kabul's court," said an official. They have as yet not replied and till that happens any headway is unlikely. Also unlikely is the re-opening of the Pakistani embassy in Kabul; Pakistan's ambassador to Afghanistan Qazi Humayun is also relinquishing his post as he has been nominated as envoy to Singapore. However he has not been officially appointed as yet. The new ambassador to Kabul will be appointed when there is a decision to re-open the embassy. The front runner for the post is Tariq Osman Haider who is presently serving as Pakistan's ambassador in Turkmenistan. Officials here believe that Rabbani' s offer to the Pakistani leadership is nothing but a gimmick meant to pressure Pakistan. "We don't take the offer seriously," said a senior official.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Official Comments on Electricity Strike

BK0106154296 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 1 Jun 96

[Report by Paneetha Ameresekere — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Power and Energy Deputy Minister Athula Nimalasiri Jayasinghe on Friday [31 May] said that the United National Party is making use of the strike, which has not only caused a real security threat from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), but also a national crisis, as a means of trying to topple a democratically elected government.

Mr. Jayasinghe said that 75% of the Ceylon Electricity Board [CEB] engineers had returned to work and that generators have been moved into the Ambatale reservoir to restore the water supply within a few hours.

"Electricity supply to hospitals, Colombo and the rest of the Island would also be restored in a couple of hours," he said. In fact the power supply to a part of the national hospital has already been given, Mr Jayasinghe said.

Four of the six turbines at the Kelanitissa power station are already operational and the balance two will be operational soon, he said. Engineers will check the 220 KV [kilovolt] Kotmale-Biyagama transmission line for any faults as a precautionary measure before transmitting power, the deputy minister said.

Meanwhile, the Daily News learnt that CEB officials attached to key areas had already returned to work.

Power in Colombo would be restored by Friday night, the suburbs by Saturday morning and the rest of the island during the course of the day, informed sources said.

The catchment areas are receiving rain, with heavy rains being experienced in the Kotmale reservoir area. Engineers checking the Kotmale-Biyagama power line have found it to be in order, they added.

Sri Lanka: Business Leaders Welcome 'Quick End' to Power Strike

BK0306024596 Colombo SUNDAY OBSERVER in English 2 Jun 96

[Report by Florence Wickramage — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Business leaders were heaving sighs of relief over what seemed to be a quick end to the crippling strike by workers in the power sector. A statement issued jointly by the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FCCI) and the Organisation of Professional Associations [OPA] appealed to both the Government and the power sector unions to end the strike situation and moved toward dialogue.

FCCI-SL [Sri Lanka] president Patrick Amarasinghe welcomed the news that the four-day strike was ending. "Business had virtually come to grinding halt," Mr. Amarasinghe told the Sunday Observer.

The four-day strike, which cut off all power supplies to industry and vital services, had had a "drastic effect on the economy," he said.

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Mr. Amarasinghe said that the Federation appreciated the efforts of the 'Mulberry Group' of PA [People's Alliance] parliamentarians in helping the strikers to return to work. He said that the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry had supported the mediatory initiative of the 'Mulberry Group' and was happy over the outcome.

The joint statement warned that the strike had caused a "grave national crisis" with "very serious repercussions to the economy" and "immense suffering being caused to the general public". There had also been "a threat to the maintenance of security of the country".

The OPA and FCCI-SL appealed to the Government and the striking unions to "expeditiously negotiate for an immediate settlement." They proposed that the dispute could be resolved on the basis of a "suspension of the privatisation of Lanka Electricity Company and, the resolution of the salary issues within one month".

Top industrialist and former president of the powerful Ceylon Chamber of Commerce Mallory Wijesinghe said that business had come to a standstill due to the disruption of the power supply and other public utilities caused by the CEB [Ceylon Electricity Board] employees strike.

Mr. Wijesinghe said that the consequences should always be taken into consideration by the trade unions contemplating strike action. It was always best to avoid confrontation and to strive to come to a rational settlement through dialogue, he said.

Sri Lanka: Navy Destroys LTTE Fuel Dump; Tigers Attack Civilians

BK0106143396 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 1 Jun 96

[Unattributed report — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] The Sri Lankan Navy on Thursday [30 May] destroyed a Tiger fuel dump off Kilali in the Jaffna peninsula, defence sources in the North said.

In a surprise raid, the Navy attacked the fuel dump, destroying it and several boats. A large number of Tigers are believed to have perished. The sources said the fire lasted for several hours and was visible for several kilometres. There have been no civilian or Navy casualties.

A group of 15 Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] had attacked civilian boats plying the Kalpitiya-Mannar route on Wednesday and removed a valuable consignment of foodstuffs and other essential items, the operational headquarters said. It said the Tigers who came in three boats had intercepted two civilian cargo boats and one passenger boat off the coast of Silvathurai in Mannar district and forcibly brought ashore the vessels before removing the items. [passage omitted]

Sri Lanka: Clashes With LTTE Reported in North, East; Arms Recovered

BK0306021596 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 3 Jun 96

[Unattributed report — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Troops who conducted a clearing operation in some of the newly captured areas of Jaffna peninsula recovered a haul of rebels' weapons on Friday [31 May], the operational headquarters said.

The areas subject to the search were Kokuvil East, Uduvil, Suthumalai, Punnalai, Sandilippai and Araly in the Valikamam.

Among the weapons were 500 rounds of 7.02 ammunition, hand grenades, mortar bombs and automatic weapons. The search operation continues.

The troops engaged in this operation also confronted Liberation tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) members who had mingled with the civilian population. Two rebels died in a clash with the soldiers, who later recovered three T-56 rifles, one pistol, one radio set, 10 T-56 magazines and five hand grenades from the scene of the incident. LTTE casualties are believed to be higher.

Four soldiers also died in the clash while two were wounded.

At least two rebels died in a gunbattle with the security forces at Chenkalady in the Batticaloa district, eastern province on Saturday morning, the operational headquarters said.

It said the clash began when troops on a route clearing patrol were fired upon by a group of rebels. Troops returned fire, causing heavy casualties among the LTTE cadres. One soldier was killed in action while a civilian was wounded due to the crossfire.

The soldiers later recovered two bodies of rebels, along with an automatic weapon and two cyanide capsules.

Four policemen were killed in a claymore mine explosion on Friday morning in Kalawanchikudy, Batticaloa.

A group of rebels have forcibly removed a Suzuki motorcycle, two outboard motors and six buoys from the Navalady fisheries school in Batticaloa on Wednesday.

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